

[illegible]

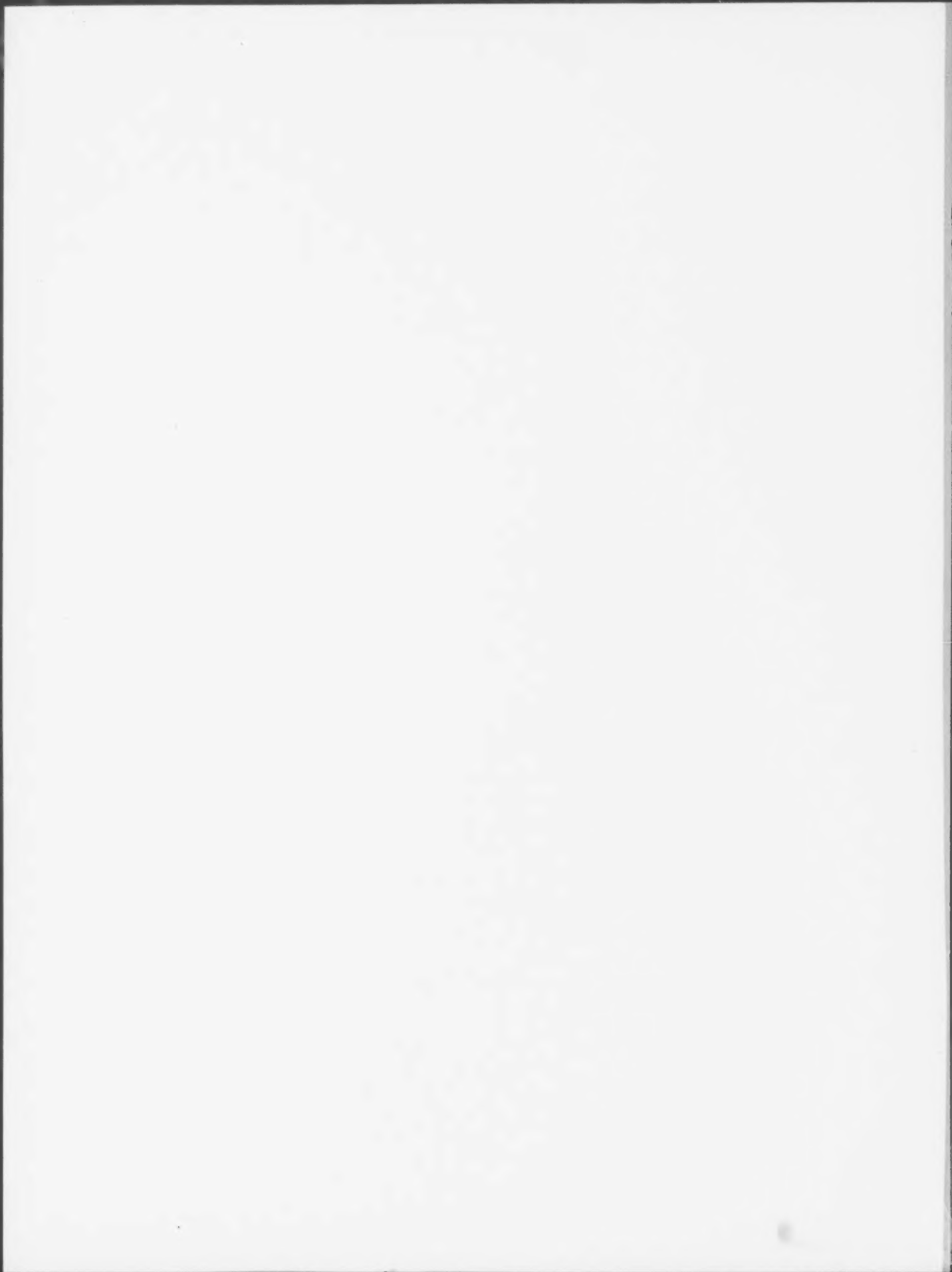


**Better quality of life for current
and future generations**

Government Sustainable Development Strategy

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

SEPTEMBER 2007



Premier's message



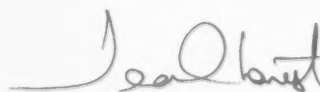
Our top priority is to enhance Quebecers' well-being, health and quality of life. This social project will make it possible to protect and make sound use of our environment for the greater good of current and future generations. It is based on a vision of sustainable development that links environmental protection, social progress and economic efficiency.

The National Assembly's unanimous adoption of the *Sustainable Development Act* is eloquent proof of the project's importance and reflects the will of all concerned to play a role in achieving this goal. All government departments, agencies and enterprises are being asked to support Québec society in order to mobilize its component elements.

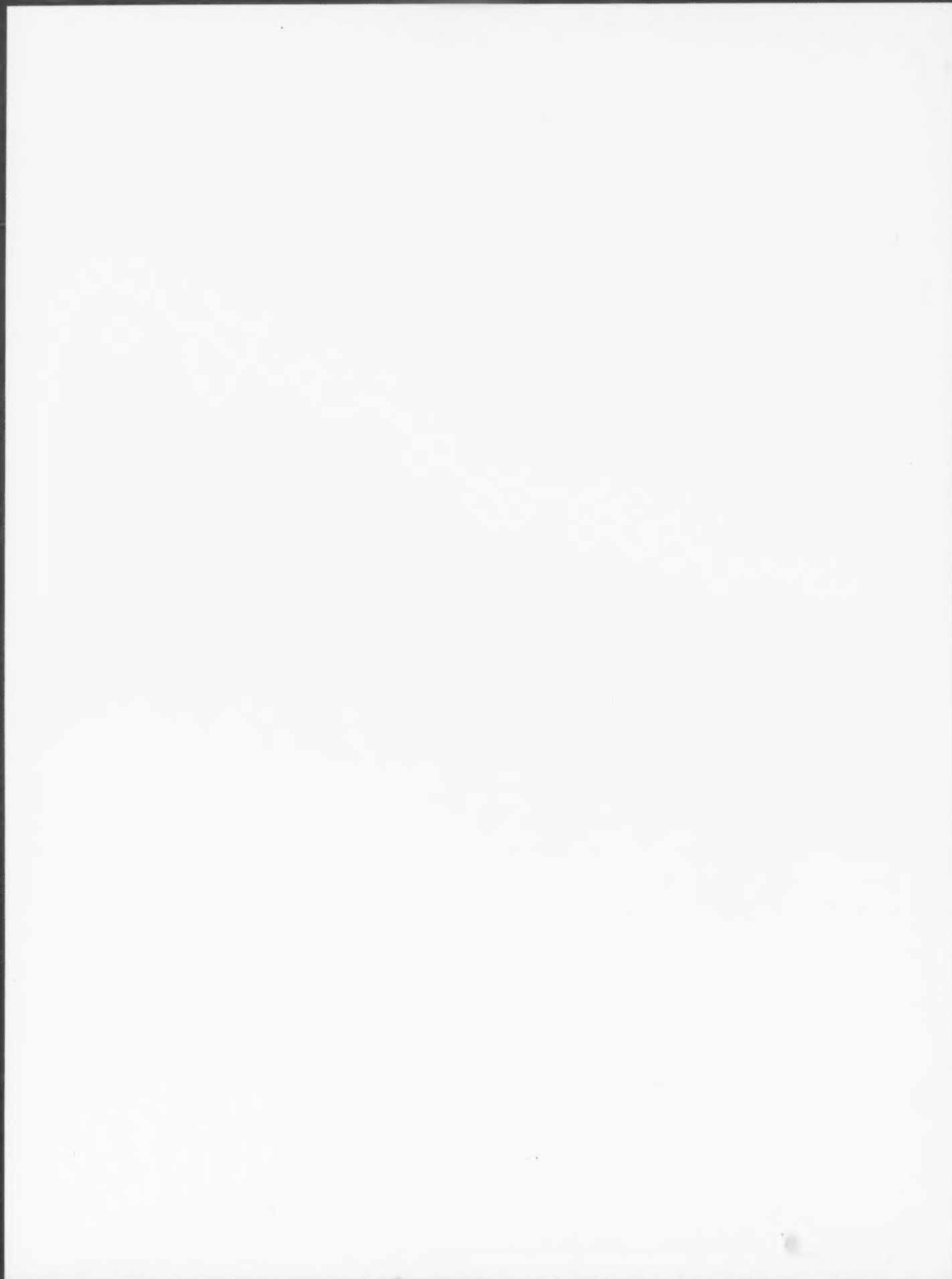
Reconciling the three dimensions of development is, in itself, an enormous challenge that offers highly stimulating opportunities to tackle the major problems facing Québec. Confronted with demographic challenges, growing health and education requirements, regional development and public debt reduction imperatives, the necessity of fighting poverty and social exclusion and the need to develop and use our natural resources rationally and responsibly and protect our environment and natural and cultural heritage, Québec has opted for innovation and a modern-day solution in the form of sustainable development.

The sustainable development strategy—the heart of our sustainable development plan—paves the way for a new era of joint efforts and intersectorial, multidisciplinary collaboration. Henceforth, all of the government's efforts must be centred on sustainable development. Government departments, agencies and enterprises will have to take the sustainable development principles contained in the *Sustainable Development Act* into account. The same is true for the objectives of the government strategy. Gradually, all sectors of our society will join us on the road to sustainable development.

The government strategy will be reflected in the action plans of its departments and public organizations through tangible measures allowing Québec to join the ranks of the most progressive, most responsible nations. By setting an example, the Québec public service will encourage the population to follow suit and pursue its efforts to help Québec society make headway equitably for the well-being of future generations.



Jean Charest



Minister's message



The *Sustainable Development Act* assented to on April 19, 2006 provides that the government adopt, in the year following that date, a strategy explaining the public service's sustainable development vision, challenges, aims and objectives. The Act confers the responsibility for orchestrating this strategy on the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks.

In a bid for effectiveness and consistency, the Government Sustainable Development Strategy draft describes the means chosen to give precedence to a concerted approach that respects all sustainable development principles. It defines the roles and responsibilities of the members of the public service and provides for mechanisms ensuring its implementation and monitoring.

This draft strategy was developed in conjunction with all government departments and many government agencies. We were especially careful to address the concerns expressed by Quebecers in the consultation tour held throughout Québec from February to May 2005.

I am, therefore, most pleased to submit, for public consultation, our sustainable development vision, objectives and implementation process. The *Sustainable Development Act* provided an action framework. The Government Sustainable Development Strategy will enable us to get to work by clearly indicating what we want to do and where we want to go.

Soon, other steps will allow Québec society to complete its adoption of the sustainable development process. Once the strategy is adopted, all government departments, agencies and enterprises will have to identify the objectives they intend to target to contribute to its implementation and the activities or measures they plan to institute. They will be invited to do so in the form of action plans. And, throughout the coming year, following another public consultation, Québec should be able to adopt an initial series of indicators allowing it to diligently pursue the progress it will have made.

This draft sustainable development strategy concerns each and every one of us. Its realization depends on the commitment of us all.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Line Beauchamp".

Line Beauchamp

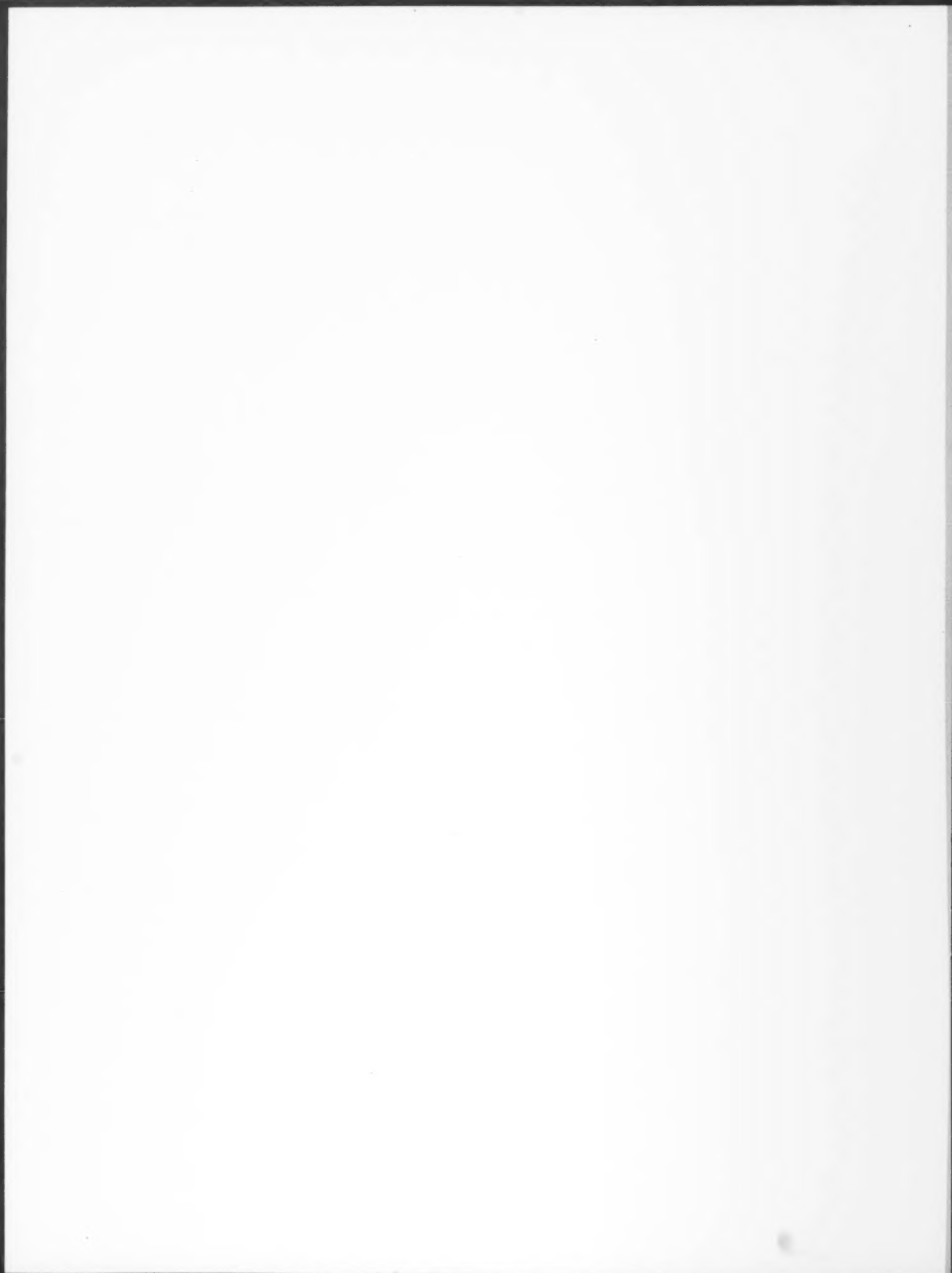
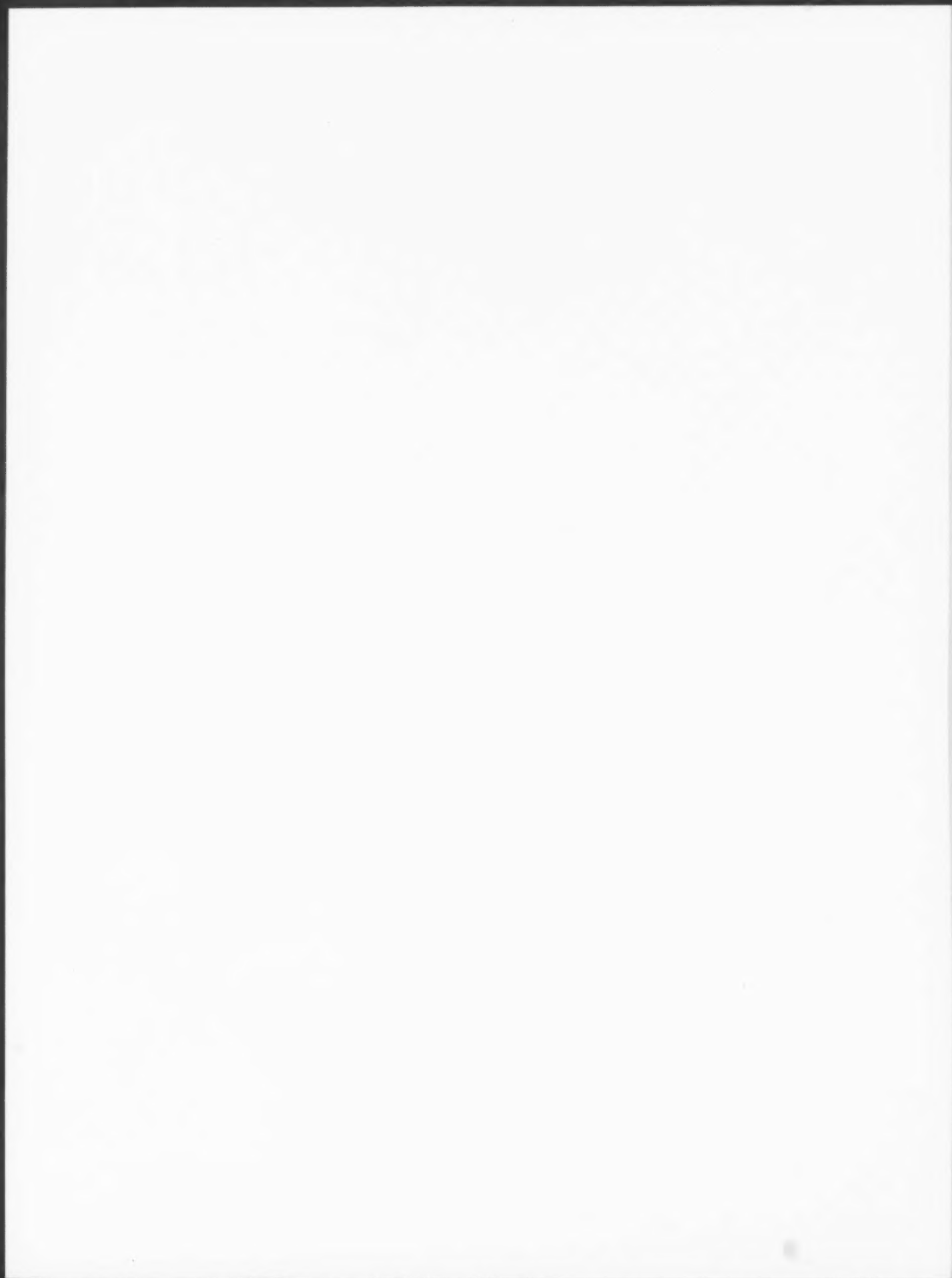


Table of Contents

Introduction	9
Three fundamental challenges.....	13
Challenge 1: Develop knowledge	13
Challenge 2: Promote responsible action	13
Challenge 3: Foster commitment	13
Nine strategic sustainable development directions.....	15
Direction 1 Inform, raise awareness, educate, innovate	17
INFORMATION	17
ÉDUCATION AND TRAINING.....	18
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION	18
Direction 2 Reduce and manage risks to improve health, safety and the environment	19
PREVENTIVE APPROACH	19
CONCERTED RISK MANAGEMENT	20
Direction 3 Produce and consume responsibly	21
ECORESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION	23
ETHICS, ECOCONDITIONALITY AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY.....	24
Direction 4 Increase economic efficiency	25
EXTERNALITIES	25
MEASURES WITH ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND ECOFISCALITY	25
Direction 5 Address demographic changes	27
DEMOGRAPHIC BALANCE	28
EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	29
Direction 6 Practice integrated, sustainable land use and development	31
INTEGRATED LAND MANAGEMENT	32
IMPROVING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS	33
Direction 7 Preserve and share the collective heritage	35
MANAGEMENT OF THE COLLECTIVE HERITAGE	35
COOPERATION.....	36
Direction 8 Promote social involvement	37
COMMUNITY ACTION.....	37
DEMOCRATIC LIFE.....	37
Direction 9 Prevent and reduce social and economic inequality	39
EQUITY.....	39
SOCIAL INTEGRATION.....	40
Mechanisms and means for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.....	41
Mechanisms provided for by the Act	42
Other measures facilitating the strategy's implementation	43
Appendix 1 Addressing required issues	47
Appendix 2 Government Sustainable Development Strategy – Summary Table	48



Government Sustainable Development Strategy

This document reflects the government's commitment to draw up a sustainable development strategy aimed at integrating environmental, social and economic concerns in a context of intergenerational equity. It addresses three main challenges and proposes strategic directions and goals for a government sustainable development strategy. It reflects the concerns Quebecers expressed in the consultation tour on Québec's sustainable development plan conducted by the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks from February to May 2005, and results from the work of the Comité interministériel du développement durable (interdepartmental committee on sustainable development - CIDD).

Introduction

Context

The passage of the Sustainable Development Act was an important milestone in the government's sustainable development process. Now, this process has to become even more concrete in the form of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy, which is the reference framework in which the government indicates its aims, objectives and methods for achieving this end. Ministerial policies, programs and actions must fall within this reference framework in order to make government action coherent within a perspective of sustainable development.

As soon as the strategy takes effect, more than fifty government departments, agencies and enterprises will prepare and implement action plans to achieve the goals defined in it. Among other things, these action plans will be based on pursuing the sectorial sustainable development measures already implemented (see figure 1). Reporting and monitoring measures will be set up to assess the extent to which these objectives have been attained.

Public consultation

Before going ahead and adopting a government sustainable development strategy, the government wishes to submit the strategy to a public consultation. The population and all stakeholders are therefore invited to give their point of view on the draft strategy. It is possible to view both the full and abridged versions of the strategy on Portail Québec (www.gouv.qc.ca) and on the Web site created specifically for the consultation. (www.assnat.qc.ca/DeveloppementDurable). In the meantime, a parliamentary commission will receive comments and suggestions on the draft strategy.

The Sustainable Development Act assented to on April 19, 2006 gives the government one year to adopt a sustainable development strategy. Under the Act, this strategy governs primarily the public service, targeting government departments, agencies and enterprises and eventually applying to municipal bodies, educational establishments and health and social services institutions, thereby improving Quebecers' quality of life. It must help better integrate sustainable development into government policies, programs and measures to ensure consistent action in this area.

A fundamental element in the State's approach, the Government Sustainable Development Strategy must help establish a new management framework within the public service so that sustainable development becomes the watchword and guideline for the exercise of its powers and responsibilities. The strategy will underlie all legislation, strategies, policies and programs proposed by the government. The contribution of government departments and agencies to this strategy is also reflected in the pursuit of the sectorial measures they have already implemented in the area of sustainable development.

The Government Sustainable Development Strategy also concerns all Quebecers since it must reflect the range of concerns expressed by citizens and communities and all settings and living conditions in Québec in order to take the differences between rural and urban areas and the situation of Native communities into account. It seeks to influence and encourage individuals and businesses to adopt practices supporting sustainable development objectives. The measures and actions proposed by government departments and agencies will affect the lives of Quebecers and many organizations and require the participation of one and all. The public, associations and businesses are asked to carry on contributing to Québec's sustainable development.

Figure 1
Québec's Sustainable Development Plan



The government strategy centres on aims and objectives promoting the integration of social, economic and environmental considerations. It also facilitates the commitment, participation and joint efforts of government departments and agencies with regard to the following issues, defined as priorities by the *Sustainable Development Act* (Appendix 1):

- sustainable development information and education measures to be implemented, in particular, for certain classes of public service personnel;

- the development of tools or models for the design, determination and analysis of projects in terms of sustainable development, among other things to take into account all the principles of sustainable development or to implement approaches related to those principles, in particular concerning the life cycle of products and services;
- the mechanisms to be implemented to encourage the participation of the various stakeholders in society;

Results measurement

The strategy will be completed no later than one year following its approval with the adoption of a first list of sustainable development indicators to monitor and measure Québec's sustainable development progress. In this context, a special effort will be made to mesh these future indicators with other existing and future monitoring tools and measures. Therefore:

- the information and monitoring measures contained in the government departments' and agencies' action plans will be used to develop tools for measuring the extent to which this strategy's objectives have been attained;
- all monitoring information and measures will have to be consistent with the sustainable development indicators used to monitor Québec's sustainable development progress.

- the means selected to foster an integrated approach and the coherence of the various interventions undertaken in the area of sustainable development by the local and regional authorities concerned, including those undertaken by Native communities.

The action plans to be developed by government departments and public agencies following the strategy's adoption will include much more specific measures. They might, for example, concern the protection of wetlands, land use, rurality, integrated resource management, regional investment, risk management and heritage conservation (cultural, natural and other).

At every possible opportunity, the action plans will take into account the needs of First Nations who "face very difficult situations and big challenges where health, housing, education and economic instability are concerned. Maintaining a quality of life becomes a huge challenge for families who must deal with many obstacles such as the lack of job diversity and opportunities as well as a high unemployment rate and recurrent recourse to welfare. The practice of traditional activities has become increasingly difficult due

to, among other things, lack of access to quality resources as well as social and economic barriers (increase in social standing, lack of equipment and means of transport, etc.). These are all conditions that jeopardize the future of young people and generations to come" of First Nations communities.

The strategy's objectives will promote convergent action by a great many stakeholders targeting common goals, thereby permitting significant progress on the road to sustainable development.

The first part of the document proposes a vision, aims and objectives guiding the government's sustainable development approach. The recessed texts, presented in the chapters on directions 1 to 9 inclusively, give examples of government measures that already contribute, and that will continue to contribute, to the strategy's target objectives. The second part describes the strategy implementation mechanisms and the activities envisaged to encourage socio-economic players and Québec society to take this route.

A new management framework within the public service

To better integrate the search for sustainable development into its spheres of intervention, the *Sustainable Development Act* states that the public service, or Administration, must take sixteen principles into account, on which the objectives of the strategy are largely based. The government also intends to develop and use analysis and other tools to better integrate sustainable development into its decisions and actions.

This process will translate into concrete action, call on existing practices that already integrate environmental, social and economic concerns, and count on innovation. By combining individual and collective efforts to achieve common goals, the Government Sustainable Development Strategy will change the ways things are done, by fostering more equal sharing and increased partnership.

The principles of sustainable development

(Extract from the Sustainable Development Act, Chapter 3, 2006)

- a) "HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE": People, human health and improved quality of life are at the centre of sustainable development concerns. People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature;
- b) "SOCIAL EQUITY AND SOLIDARITY": Development must be undertaken in a spirit of intra- and inter-generational equity and social ethics and solidarity;
- c) "ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION": To achieve sustainable development, environmental protection must constitute an integral part of the development process;
- d) "ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY": The economy of Québec and its regions must be effective, geared toward innovation and economic prosperity that is conducive to social progress and respectful of the environment;
- e) "PARTICIPATION AND COMMITMENT": The participation and commitment of citizens and citizens' groups are needed to define a concerted vision of development and to ensure its environmental, social and economic sustainability;
- f) "ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE": Measures favourable to education, access to information and research must be encouraged in order to stimulate innovation, raise awareness and ensure effective participation of the public in the implementation of sustainable development;
- g) "SUBSIDIARITY": Powers and responsibilities must be delegated to the appropriate level of authority. Decision-making centres should be adequately distributed and as close as possible to the citizens and communities concerned;
- h) "INTER-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION": Governments must collaborate to ensure that development is sustainable from an environmental, social and economic standpoint. The external impact of actions in a given territory must be taken into consideration;
- i) "PREVENTION": In the presence of a known risk, preventive, mitigating and corrective actions must be taken, with priority given to actions at the source;
- j) "PRECAUTION": When there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty must not be used as a reason for postponing the adoption of effective measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- k) "PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE": The cultural heritage, made up of property, sites, landscapes, traditions and knowledge, reflects the identity of a society. It passes on the values of a society from generation to generation, and the preservation of this heritage fosters the sustainability of development. Cultural heritage components must be identified, protected and enhanced, taking their intrinsic rarity and fragility into account;
- l) "BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION": Biological diversity offers incalculable advantages and must be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations. The protection of species, ecosystems and the natural processes that maintain life is essential if quality of human life is to be maintained;
- m) "RESPECT FOR ECOSYSTEM SUPPORT CAPACITY": Human activities must be respectful of the support capacity of ecosystems and ensure the perennality of ecosystems;
- n) "RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION": Production and consumption patterns must be changed in order to make production and consumption more viable and more socially and environmentally responsible, in particular through an ecoefficient approach that avoids waste and optimizes the use of resources;
- o) "POLLUTER PAYS": Those who generate pollution or whose actions otherwise degrade the environment must bear their share of the cost of measures to prevent, reduce, control and mitigate environmental damage;
- p) "INTERNALIZATION OF COSTS": The cost of goods and services must reflect all the costs they generate for society during their whole life cycle, from their design to their final consumption or disposal.

Sustainable development vision

Section 2 of the Act defines "sustainable development" as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is based on a long-term approach which takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities".

This definition translates into the following vision of sustainable development proposed by the government: "A society in which the citizen's quality of life is and remains a reality. A responsible, innovative society able to excel in all of its achievements. A society based on harmony between economic vitality, environmental quality and social equity. "

The strategy in a nutshell

The Government Sustainable Development Strategy's directions, action guidelines and priority objectives correspond to the State's essential missions, reflect the government's action priorities, respect international sustainable development objectives, apply sustainable development principles and permit the implementation of tangible measures whose results can be measured.

A summary of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy is presented in Appendix 2.

Three fundamental challenges

The Government Sustainable Development Strategy seeks to enhance the quality of life of current and future generations. It is based on three fundamental challenges resulting from this overall intention and simultaneously addresses the three inextricable dimensions linked to quality of life: living environment (environmental dimension), lifestyle (social dimension) and standard of living (economic dimension).

ACTION-ORIENTED

These challenges linked to knowledge, responsible action and social commitment translate into nine directions outlining the route the government intends to take. These directions and the twenty-nine related objectives will guide government departments and agencies in preparing their sustainable development action plans. Monitoring measures will then make it possible to assess whether the results envisaged were achieved.

Challenge 1: **Develop knowledge**

Knowledge is the preferred tool for encouraging endorsement of sustainable development values and principles and making enlightened decisions. Knowledge enables better action.

The development, acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and scientific, technical, traditional and popular experiments and experience require awareness, training, research and innovation. Thanks to this knowledge, it is possible to act efficiently and responsibly to rouse the public's interest and stimulate commitment. In the sustainable development context, knowledge must be used to reduce and better manage the risk factors that could harm people's health and safety. It can help to develop the land and its resources responsibly and promote individual and collective growth.

Challenge 2: **Promote responsible action**

Adopting practices that are both socially and ecologically responsible and economically viable contributes to development and prosperity. To be more viable, every society must try to reduce its ecological footprint² so as to leave future generations equitable development opportunities that are at least equal to those we currently enjoy. It must continually question its production and consumption modes to make them more efficient and more responsible. In this context, the public service is called to play a front-line role, show leadership and promote responsible action by the population.

In foresight, Québec must also adjust to demographic changes by adopting innovative measures designed to foster economic prosperity and demographic balance, notably through catalyst projects creating wealth. It must develop its land and natural resources responsibly, using an integrated management approach based on resource sustainability and communities' viability and resilience³ while promoting the expression of regional cultural diversity. The public service must show leadership by integrating sustainable development objectives and principles into all of its decisions and actions.

Challenge 3: **Foster commitment**

Implementing sustainable development in Québec requires commitment on the part of all sectors of society and the entire public service. This commitment must be manifest individually and collectively in the will to safeguard the various components of the collective heritage and equitable sharing of collective wealth. The fight against poverty and social exclusion, and the improvement of quality of life require the government to exercise leadership in the area of community commitment and sharing. In this regard, we must work together to meet challenges that extend beyond Québec's borders.

By fostering personal involvement in society, the State and the population combine their efforts in an approach that ensures the expression of various viewpoints and the development of a society that respects the environment and that is committed and prosperous at the same time.

2 "The ecological footprint is a measure of the impact of human activity on nature. It evaluates the productive land required by a population to meet its resource consumption and waste absorption needs", World Wildlife Fund.

3 "The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures", *Disaster reduction and sustainable development*, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, United Nations, January 2003.

Nine strategic sustainable development directions

The government wishes to address these sustainable development challenges while taking into account the inextricable nature of their environmental, social and

economic dimensions. The three challenges: develop knowledge, promote responsible action and foster commitment will be addressed in each of the following directions:

Direction 1

Inform, raise awareness, educate, innovate

Direction 2

Reduce and manage risks to improve health, safety and the environment

Direction 3

Produce and consume responsibly

Direction 4

Increase economic efficiency

Direction 5

Address demographic changes

Direction 6

Practice integrated, sustainable land use and development

Direction 7

Preserve and share the collective heritage

Direction 8

Promote social involvement

Direction 9

Prevent and reduce social and economic inequality

In the following chapters, each strategic direction is examined in keeping with the action guidelines chosen, among other things, to follow up on the decisions of the

*Forum des générations*⁴. Each direction is then expressed in the form of objectives. The Government Sustainable Development Strategy targets twenty-nine objectives.

⁴ The *Forum des générations* was one of the *Place aux citoyens* forums held throughout Québec. Forum participants agreed to apply their actions to nine specific fields: stepping up our efforts in prevention, guaranteeing the future of our health system, guaranteeing educational services for future generations throughout the territory, helping families, developing the economy of Québec and its regions, training and adapting the workforce, acting on immigration, focusing on sustainable development for Québec and implementing the youth action strategy.



Direction I

Inform, raise awareness, educate, innovate

A sense of responsibility and accountability is born of the ability to feel that a given situation concerns us, understanding its stakes and challenges, recognizing that we are party to them and acting effectively within an opportune time frame. In the context of sustainable development, it is essential that each and every one of us adopt values, principles and objectives promoting responsible behaviour. We must learn and apply practices helping to improve quality of life. This direction is based on the principles of *participation and commitment* and *access to knowledge*.

Be it in the field of natural sciences, the humanities or social sciences, culture, technologies or the economy, Québec must constantly innovate. People devising ideas, practices – related to social innovation⁵ etc. – and novel technologies must be encouraged to contribute and their work must be recognized. Given the rising demand for goods and services complying with social and environmental accountability criteria, it is essential to remain at the cutting edge of new markets, both domestic and foreign, in order to ensure that Québec's economy is competitive and efficient in the long term.

INFORMATION

By decreeing the period 2005-2014 "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" the United Nations acknowledged that the world population needs to know more about the concept of sustainable development and its implications. This concept is still too often associated solely with environmental protection.

We must work even harder to make people aware of the concept of sustainable development, its imperatives and the environmental, social and economic challenges associated with it so that each member of society can help achieve it. The identification and publication of sustainable development indicators is one of the means contained in Québec's *Sustainable Development Act* for informing the public of the current situation and progress made.



Informing people about responsible action

On its website OPCjeunesse (www.opc.gouv.qc.ca/jeunesse), under the banner "Getting Your Money's Worth and Saving Your Planet at the Same Time," the *Office de la protection du consommateur* offers an educational component and material to make people aware of how they can consume responsibly. Intended for educators, it presents exploration activities and educational games designed to encourage young people to consume responsibly. The site's adult section also has a number of topics on sustainable development.

Le Coin de Rafale, the youth section of the *Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs*' website, proposes various adventures and information capsules for young people wishing to know more about their environment (www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/jeunesse/index.htm). Rafale and friends also encourage young Internet users to think about their lifestyles and habits from a sustainable development viewpoint.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The search for sustainable development is underpinned by education and lifelong learning. Not only must we continue teaching the sustainable development concept and principles, we must train the labour force to meet its challenges.

Sustainable development challenges generally require analyzing situations and problems from a new perspective and using innovative technologies and methods. We must ensure that educational programs favour the acquisition of new skills and that they are available and accessible to those concerned.

Government departments and agencies, communities and individuals are already working towards sustainable development. They have the knowledge and know-how enabling them to accompany other players in this area. We need to encourage and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience that is acquired.

In keeping with the Act, the government will ensure that the departmental action plans resulting from this first strategy include sustainable development information and training measures for certain classes of public service personnel. Among other things, these measures will address the contents, implementation and monitoring of the *Sustainable Development Act* and Government Sustainable Development Strategy, and the methodological tools designed to better integrate sustainable development into decision-making processes.

Expertise recherche Québec

Expertise recherche Québec is a project reflecting the government's desire to enrich its research and innovation monitoring. Once completed, this project will have mapped areas of competence in university research and provided a series of indicators for measuring research in Québec—its strengths, funding and spinoffs. *Expertise recherche Québec* resulted from the pooling of expertise and resources of the Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation, the Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la nature et les technologies, the Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture and the Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec. The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport also supports it.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Sustainable development requires support for research conducted in order to devise new technologies or establish new practices or new products and services meeting the criteria of environmental accountability. The creativity of individuals, businesses and organizations must be developed and encouraged. It is also essential that we recognize their contribution to solving problems concerning them, thus the need for supporting and disseminating new, pro-sustainable development initiatives.

Proposed objectives

- 1. Make people increasingly aware of the sustainable development concept and principles. Promote knowledge and experience sharing in this area and assimilate the knowledge and know-how facilitating its implementation.**
- 2. Create and periodically update Québec's sustainable development profile.**
- 3. Support research and new practices and technologies contributing to sustainable development and maximizing the spinoffs in Québec.**

Direction 2

Reduce and manage risks to improve health, safety and the environment

Improving health and safety is a fundamental concern for any society. From a sustainable development viewpoint, it requires a global approach to risk management⁶ and integrated promotion and awareness efforts in all echelons of society.

Managing health and safety hazards is based on the principles of *prevention, precaution, environmental protection, access to knowledge, and health and quality of life* with emphasis on their associated causes. In the presence of a known risk, actions designed to prevent or mitigate the potential effects of the phenomenon or event feared must be taken, first at the source, using the best available and economically-applicable techniques. In so doing, we can reduce medium- and long-term impacts on health, safety and the environment and considerably cut intervention costs.

This requires correctly assessing the phenomena or events to which individuals and communities are exposed, defining their degree of vulnerability and determining potential consequences. The actions taken and measures implemented to reduce risks and react to dangerous events or phenomena must be based on solid facts.

Lifestyles, living, work, leisure and sports environments and social and environmental conditions are decisive factors for health and safety. They require individuals and communities to become involved and make a commitment. Protecting the population, preventing risks and managing health problems related to the environment, lifestyles and daily practices require simultaneous action in several sectors.



PREVENTIVE APPROACH

Health, a state of physical, mental and social well-being, is closely linked to safety. Physical and psychological health may be affected by an unsafe environment, facilities and practices. Consequently, it is important to adopt a global health and safety approach based on knowledge, surveillance, monitoring, and appropriate development and management of living environments, including the work environment. This global approach must use the principles of prevention and precaution.

We must build a culture of prevention and ongoing improvement to reduce the risk of accidents and illnesses and enhance quality of life. Efforts in this sense will benefit the health, safety and environment of current and future generations.

⁶ Risk, as used here, means the possible effects on the public's health and safety of natural phenomena and human activity such as those caused by climate change, natural and man-made disasters, air pollution, occupational diseases and criminality. These phenomena or events affect the environment, economy and society. They entail interruptions in production and sometimes considerable material damage. They also cause accidents.

Occupational health and safety action plans

Managing health and safety on the job involves identifying, correcting and controlling dangers and hazards on sites where goods or services are produced. To help develop a culture of prevention among future employers and workers, the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST) has adopted a three-tiered action plan, endorsed by its partners, based on education, training and workplace integration. Its objective is to make future workers and employers more apt to take charge of their health and safety at work. It also seeks to specifically reduce the rate of occupational accidents among young workers.

The Program for the promotion of healthy lifestyles

Quebecers' health is a major concern for the Québec government. A healthy lifestyle, especially regular physical activity and a nutritious diet, is decisive for health. With a view to prevention, the Québec government launched its *Program for the promotion of healthy lifestyles*. The campaign to promote healthy lifestyles is also one of the objectives of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux's *national public health program*. It is one of the components of measures implemented by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport in the area of health, physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, notably through its "Écoles en forme et en santé" and "Québec en forme" programs and the "École en santé" approach.

CONCERTED RISK MANAGEMENT

Enhanced safety also involves individual and collective responsibilities. A society wishing to ensure its economic prosperity and growth and seeking to protect its living environment acts upstream of disasters and other events or phenomena that could have harmful effects, such as those generated by climate change, pandemics or toxic product spills, to avoid them or reduce their potential impacts. Concerted management of the risks potentially facing a nation and a territory must be included in a sustainable development initiative. This management must help reduce risks and increase communities' resilience to emergencies threatening the social, economic and environmental balance sought.

Framework for the prevention of natural risks

Five government departments – public security; sustainable development, environment and parks; municipal and regional affairs; transport; and natural resources and wildlife – have decided to take joint preventive action in the management of different natural events like soil movement, floods and coastal erosion. A prevention framework was adopted in light of the growing certainty that climate changes operating on a global scale will increase the rate at which extreme meteorological phenomena occur over the years to come. This realization and the fact that it affects all of Québec calls for a combined effort.

Proposed objectives

4. **Continue developing and promoting a culture of prevention and define conditions that are beneficial for health, safety and the environment.**
5. **Better prepare communities to face events that could harm their health and safety and to mitigate the consequences.**

Direction 3

Produce and consume responsibly

The State is instrumental in making the public aware of sustainable development practices and encouraging their integration. Government departments and agencies are preferred players in stimulating active participation in choices that will enable us to leave future generations a sound environmental, economic and social heritage. In this regard, the government intends to show leadership by integrating environmental and social accountability criteria into its procurement and contract allocation processes. It also plans to encourage business accountability. This initiative addresses the principles of *environmental protection, respect for ecosystem support capacity, responsible production and consumption and polluter pays*.

The responsible production of consumer goods and services concerns the manner in which human, material and energy resources are used. For example, goods and services production uses natural resources, generates waste and sometimes involves the risk of accident, which can be prevented and reduced by applying certain environmental management measures such as service life analysis⁷ and environmental auditing.

Government corporations

In Québec and the world over, a growing number of businesses, aware of their responsibilities to their employees, economic partners, customers and community, are buying new or used production equipment that complies with environmental, health and safety standards to protect workers. More and more businesses are ensuring that work organization meets the needs of employees that combine career, family and social involvement. Government corporations like Hydro-Québec, Loto-Québec and the Société des alcools du Québec stand out for their socially and environmentally responsible actions.



By examining production processes, government departments and agencies, NGOs and businesses can discover their weaknesses and determine improvements that could be made to:

- maximize re-use and reduce consumption;
- support innovative designs to enhance the environmental quality of products and the built environment;
- reduce the amount of energy and natural resources required to produce goods and services;
- reduce the manufacturing, use and environmental discharge of substances that are harmful to living organisms;
- reduce the possibilities of dysfunctional production processes to avoid their potential consequences;
- increase processed material content and "recyclability" of materials, products, buildings and infrastructures;
- maximize the use of renewable resources;
- increase products' service life;
- increase service quality;
- achieve higher customer satisfaction levels.

7

Analyzing the service life of a good, process or service is a means of evaluating its environmental impacts from the time the natural resources are extracted to the time it is disposed of as waste, via its manufacturing, delivery, use and dismantling when its service life is over.

Moreover, to ensure organizations' and businesses' viability and performance, responsible human resource management makes it possible to:

- reduce staff turnover;
- increase satisfaction at work;
- attract and keep new workers;
- develop conditions promoting the establishment of families.

Re-use, recycling and other forms of recovery help reduce waste destined for disposal. These practices must be encouraged. It is also important to encourage the choice of replacement goods or services and the adoption of less harmful practices. Consumption of local products must be encouraged since it reduces transportation-related impacts and fosters local employment.

We must re-examine our needs and consumer behaviour to rethink our choices and identify improvements to be made to:

- reduce, re-use, recycle and recover;
- consume products whose production, composition and use respect sustainable development principles and comply with quality criteria and social and environmental accountability imperatives;
- restrict the consumption of goods that entail wasting resources.

Québec's energy strategy

Energy efficiency plays an important role in Québec's energy strategy, the *Stratégie énergétique du Québec*. All members of society will be asked, in their workplace, in their purchases, in their travel and at home, to make Québec a model of sound energy consumption management. In the context of the energy strategy, the *Agence de l'efficacité énergétique* is asked to implement an overall plan targeting better energy use, in conjunction with power distributors and the sectors concerned. This plan will ensure coherent action that is positive for all forms of energy and that will reduce Québec's energy intensity.⁸

Québec's climate change action plan

Québec has adopted a climate change action plan, *Québec and Climate Change—A challenge for the future*, putting it at the forefront of North American governments in the fight against climate change. It targets specific goals and identifies the initiatives instituted to attain the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol. It was developed based on actions designed to reduce and avoid greenhouse gas emissions in Québec in the following sectors: energy, transportation, industry, waste, agriculture, State leadership, public awareness, research, development and implementation of technologies, and use of economic tools in climate change.

Québec's mass transit policy

Aware that the use of mass transit and ridesharing require improvement of the public services offered, the government, through its *Politique québécoise du transport collectif*, encourages enhanced supply and quality of user services, and urges the public to use these transport options through direct funding for the improvement of these services. This policy is not restricted to government intervention in supporting mass transit but also supports other alternatives to vehicle transportation. Through this policy, the use of mass transit and ridesharing, in both urban and rural settings, will allow public transportation to increase its share in passenger transport modes.

Better social and environmental practices can bolster public and private organizations' profitability and investment since markets favouring these practices are growing and since they reduce social and environmental risks and costs. Consequently, ecoresponsibility and social accountability⁹ are concepts that are being adopted by more and more government agencies, NGOs and businesses wishing to improve their sustainable development performance. The government intends to pursue its efforts in this regard.

⁸ Indicator defined as the energy consumed per unit of production.

⁹ Integration of social and ecological concerns into business operations and relationships with interested parties.

ECORESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Government departments and agencies will make efforts and involve their partners in identifying and implementing actions to promote more responsible consumption and production measures. They will encourage endorsement of the principles contained in the *Sustainable Development Act*, such as *polluter pays*, *respect for ecosystem support capacity* and the principles of *prevention* and *precaution*.

Ecoresponsibility¹⁰ consists in integrating environmental concerns into production management activities. Among other things, this approach involves energy efficiency and renewable energies, risk mitigation, reduced use of raw materials and water, and waste recovery, re-use and recycling. It advocates innovation, state-of-the-art technologies and environmental management¹¹. It makes it possible to increase productivity through quality design or various other measures that reduce the environmental impacts of goods and services production. It involves designing products, adopting means of production and consumption and management practices encouraging efficiency. The development and encouraged use of mass transit and urban bike paths, and use of renewable energies are examples of actions that stimulate ecoresponsible consumption and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, among other things.

Moreover, integrating environmental parameters into consumption choices can make consumption activities more environmentally-friendly. If we know the manufacturing methods used and the consequences of using a given good or service, we can make more enlightened choices in terms of social, cultural, economic and environmental capital.

A major consumer of goods and services, the public service plays a driving role in the Québec economy. In a bid for efficiency, it will take the lead by adopting ecologically and socially responsible practices.

An ecoresponsible procurement policy

The Centre de services partagés du Québec, a major buyer of goods and services in Québec's public sector, strives to be a model of sustainable development. Considering that each of its procurement decisions affects the environment and society, it has adopted an in-house policy of ecoresponsible procurement. This policy is applied by its employees and extends to its clients and suppliers. It outlines the aims guiding its procurement practices by applying values such as accessibility, transparency, equity and impartiality, fair competition, objectivity and performance while promoting the integration of environmental and social parameters.

In a context of abundant, diverse consumer products, we need guidelines to make enlightened, responsible choices when procuring goods and services. Official, recognized, credible certification guaranteeing safety and quality is often useful. For producers, certification of their goods and services is a marketing tool and may represent a significant competitive advantage. This type of approach should be supported. Certification by an authorized body promotes responsible production and consumption. It offers consumers the advantage of being able to recognize the goods and services that respect the quality and social and environmental responsibility criteria.

Environmental certification of public buildings

The Société immobilière du Québec has undertaken to obtain "Go Green" certification for the buildings for which it is responsible. This program recognizes the efforts that the managers of these buildings make to introduce good environmental practices in operating their building. The program's criteria are considered excellent environmental practices for commercial and institutional buildings. They encourage reducing energy and drinking water consumption, managing construction waste and hazardous products, using healthy and recycled materials and ensuring interior air quality.

10 "The principle of ecoresponsibility falls under a more global approach of taking sustainable development into account. Governments have several responsibilities: an environmental responsibility, a social responsibility and an economic responsibility. While safeguarding the environment we must also help improve working conditions and cut back on budgets", ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement durable, France.

11 Environmental management consists in defining the environmental aspects of an institution's business' or organization's activities so as to reduce the environmental impacts.

ETHICS, ECOCONDITIONALITY¹² AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the *Sustainable Development Act*, like many other governments, such as France and Germany, the State must set an example and take sustainable principles and objectives into account in its decision-making. One way to encourage best practices is to subject public investment to environmental protection and social accountability criteria.

The government intends to have its departments and agencies pledge to ensure that their actions are coherent from an environmental and social standpoint. Implementing ecoconditionality and social accountability in public assistance programs and financial institutions' programs are an option. To promote efficient, responsible practices, public programs will increasingly respect certain environmental standards and objectives and apply social accountability to the allocation of financial assistance. Similarly, as required by the *Sustainable Development Act*, the government will ensure that tools and scorecards are developed to allow the public service to better take sustainable development principles into consideration.

Concrete application of ecoconditionality in the agricultural context

The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation applies the principle of ecoconditionality in its *Programme de remboursement des taxes foncières aux exploitations agricoles*, or program of property tax refunds to agricultural operations. All agricultural operators benefiting from the program must show that they respect the requirements of the *Agricultural Operations Regulation* by forwarding their phosphorus statement to the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs. Applying ecoconditionality promotes coherent government action in economic and environmental terms, along with sound management of public funds and rigorous monitoring to ensure respect of the provisions of environmental legislation.

In a sustainable development context, where social and environmental accountability are important, a code of ethics is a plus for organizations. More and more government departments, agencies, institutions and enterprises are adopting a code of ethics, a code of best practices, or a policy based on sustainable development and responsible investment. Such an approach offers the twofold advantage of promoting ongoing improvement of these practices and of the corporate image.

Proposed objectives

6. **Apply environmental management measures and an ecoresponsible procurement policy within government departments and agencies.**
7. **Promote reduction in the amount of energy, natural resources and materials used to produce and market goods and services.**
8. **Increase the share of renewable energies with less environmental impact (biofuels, biogas, biomass, solar energy, wind energy, geothermics, hydroelectricity, etc.) in Québec's energy consumption.**
9. **Apply more ecoconditionality and social accountability in public assistance programs and encourage their implementation in financial institution programs.**
10. **Provide the reference points required to make enlightened, responsible consumer choices and, if applicable, promote goods and services certification.**

¹² Although many Québec government departments have adopted their own specific definitions, interdepartmental work allows ecoconditionality to be defined as subjecting assistance and grants to environmental regulations, standards and legislation in effect on a given territory.

Direction 4

Increase economic efficiency

Long considered antagonistic concepts, economic development and environmental protection can go hand in hand in a context of sustainable development. By defining real costs (which include environmental and social impacts in production values), the government and society can make enlightened choices. These choices favour optimal natural resource use and attenuate its environmental impact. The principles of sustainable development addressed in this case are *economic efficiency, internalization of costs and polluter pays*.

Economic growth is largely the result of entrepreneurs who decide to invest, take risks, create businesses and make them grow. A government's role is to create an environment that is conducive to investment and business development by keeping legislative and administrative requirements to a minimum, by legislating intelligently and by taking structuring, innovative action. It is increasingly difficult today to protect citizens, consumers and the environment. The purpose of legislation is therefore to serve public interest, contribute to innovation and economic development and encourage competition, productivity, investment and growth in the key sectors.

Intelligent legislation can reinforce conditions for a competitive, innovative economy that attracts investors and qualified workers and helps maintain a high standard of living.¹³ It prioritizes social, environmental and economic factors while achieving a high level of public protection. This approach makes business more confident in the regulatory system.

The economic efficiency of business is, among other things, the result of measures taken to provide an economic environment that is conducive to business development. Government defines several of the rules that frame or support the development of business, including legislative and regulatory frameworks, taxation, business agreements, equipment and public infrastructures. It can also in various ways influence the social climate and quality of life, which are essential ingredients of economic prosperity.¹⁴ In the same vein, external factors, the adoption of measures having an economic impact, and ecofiscality are other means that can be taken to support and increase economic efficiency.



EXTERNALITIES

The term "externality" or external cost designates the economic cost that is normally not taken into account by markets or in market agents' decisions. In a sustainable development context, we must recognize the social, economic and environmental impacts of goods and services throughout their service life, from their design to their consumption or end use. This approach allows decision-makers and consumers to know the actual cost of the goods and services they use and, consequently, to make more enlightened choices.

¹³ La réglementation intelligente, Comité consultatif externe sur la réglementation intelligente, September 2004.

¹⁴ L'avantage Québécois - Stratégie gouvernementale de développement économique (Quebec Strategy for Economic Development - the Quebec Advantage), 2005.

MEASURES WITH ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND ECOFISCALITY

Various economic measures are advocated to ensure that resources are used more rationally and more responsibly. For instance, ecofiscality, which is increasingly used in OECD countries, can correct distortions arising on markets due to poor resource allocation and causing serious damage to the environment. To correct this situation, governments employ various fiscal measures, including taxes, duties, royalties, credits and exemptions.

Two examples of fiscal measures contributing to sustainable development in Québec

Specific duty on new tires: a duty is charged on every new tire sold retail. This duty also applies to new tires equipping road vehicles sold retail or leased long-term. The receipts are used to manage the annual flow of used tires and empty used tire storage sites in order to recycle them.

Property tax exemption for natural reserves on private lands: the *Act respecting Municipal Taxation* exempts natural reserves recognized under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act* from municipal and school taxes. This exemption seeks to encourage private owners to take voluntary conservation measures.

The benefits of these economic-impact measures and ecofiscality are manifold:

- correct market prices so that the price of resources, goods and services better reflects environmental impacts and costs for society;
- change businesses' behaviour vis-à-vis increases in the price of resources, pollutant products and hazardous products. Consumers see the advantage of using replacement products that are more environmentally-friendly and producers receive positive signals for the development of less polluting products and processes that generate less waste and fewer risks or that require fewer resources;
- remunerate positive externalities when an economic activity contributes to society's quality of life and this remuneration is not possible to obtain on markets;
- transfer the tax burden to manufacturers of products that are harmful to the environment (revenues from taxes, duties or royalties on resources and products that can be reinvested in remedial activities).

Like certain OECD countries, the Québec government seeks to avoid the deleterious effects of certain taxes and to identify new economic measures to achieve sustainable development objectives.

Proposed objectives

- 11. Increasingly reveal the externalities associated with goods and services production and consumption.**
- 12. Promote recourse to economic, fiscal and non-fiscal incentives so that goods and services production and consumption reflect sustainable development imperatives.**

Direction 5

Address demographic changes

Demographics, economy and development are closely related realities, the consequences of which are suffered more by Québec than other societies. In a few years, the number of births in Québec and the arrival and settling down of immigrants will no longer suffice to ensure the renewal of our population in the long term. By 2032, Québec's population could drop unless there is a significant increase in the birth rate or migratory balance. The segment of the population between the ages of 20 and 64 years, which is the key source of workers on which economic growth relies, will also drop. Among other things, Québec more than any other society with which it can compare will face an acceleration in the aging of its population, a phenomenon attributable to denatality and longer life expectancy.

The aging population, combined with the rising cost of new technologies, will more than likely lead to a substantial increase in health costs.

For all these reasons, the government intends to take measures to maintain and improve the population's standard of living and maintain the State's financial ability to provide its citizens with the services to which they are accustomed and to meet new needs in full keeping with this financial ability. In this light, the principles of *health and quality of life, social equity and solidarity and economic efficiency* set forth in the *Sustainable Development Act* are given their full meaning.

It is particularly important to fight against school dropouts, to see to it that as many young people as possible earn a diploma and that those old enough to work are given adequate training. Moreover, it is essential to decrease the public debt, which will weigh heavier on subsequent generations who are fewer in number, thereby increasing their responsibilities toward their elders.

On the other hand, the government also considers the fact that things are quite different for Québec's Native communities, where there is strong demographic growth and the segment under age 30 represents 50% of the population. In 20 years, the Native community should increase three times more quickly than the non-Native population.



It appears that the major trends in the population's geographic distribution will be maintained. Urban sprawl will continue to the detriment of certain resource regions. A certain demographic vigour will manifest itself again over the coming years in south-western Québec, particularly in the greater metropolitan region of Montréal and the Ottawa Valley.

Responding to demographic changes consists in promoting a strong economy while providing the conditions needed to facilitate family, personal and professional life. New balances must be sought while carrying out actions that act on the size and distribution of the population and which ensure continued and adequate support for families, particularly those required to care for loved ones who have lost their autonomy. The number of jobs must also be increased and working conditions improved (compensation, work time organization and productivity). The demographic decline and depopulation of the regions are burdensome trends that cannot be dealt with other than by simultaneously addressing several of the causes.

DEMOGRAPHIC BALANCE

Québec's demographic profile must be improved through a higher birth rate, a greater number of immigrants and a positive interprovincial migratory balance.

Intervention must target families which, regardless of their make-up, are an important component of sustainable development. Indeed, in addition to being a factor in social cohesion and the transmission and upholding of values, it is a network of help and support that lasts a lifetime. The family is the first environment for each of its members. Improving the standard of living of adults, introducing measures enabling them to conciliate their responsibilities, and developing socioeconomic conditions that are favourable for families are some of the conditions that could foster the desire to have children. Other measures could create an environment suitable for youth, help them enter the job market and encourage them to have an active personal life. Improving lifestyle is also an objective to benefit families: better dwellings, multi-functional neighbourhoods, quality urban spaces that are safe, clean and user-friendly, well-designed parks and natural spaces, cultural equipment and accessible public transportation services.

Québec Parental Insurance Plan

The *Québec Parental Insurance Plan* aims to conciliate work and family responsibilities. It provides better financial support to parents who leave the job market to have or adopt a child. It pays benefits to all eligible workers – on salary or self-employed – who take leave under the law (maternity leave, parental leave, paternity leave or adoption leave).

The educational daycare services network

The *Childcare Services at the Reduced Contribution for Children Younger Than Five Program* provides families with minimal cost childcare services for children under age five at CPE childcare centres, home daycares, or for-profit daycares. Providing an educational network enables the mothers of young children to look for work.

Ensuring the welfare of families requires input from several actors in society, notably municipalities, community organizations and the Conférences régionales des élus (CRE). From this standpoint, a municipal policy on families can help balance work and family and focus the actions of local partners on the quality of the environments, on the synergy of local and regional players and on the dynamics of the affected areas.

Young farmers policy

The decrease in the active population gives rise to recruiting more young people in the different sectors of industry. A component of the youth policy of the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation aims to establish a greater number of qualified young farmers and ensure their enterprise's perennality. This component is noted for its comprehensive approach which covers quality of life, training, coaching, access to the profession and a better knowledge of the realities of agricultural succession. Measures for young farmers focus on areas including juggling work and family, promoting the agricultural profession and supporting activities for recognizing and encouraging young women to become farmers.

Economic immigration could be a significant factor in Québec's development and prosperity. Spinoffs include investments, jobs, an improvement in expertise and increased use of innovative approaches. Immigrants must be encouraged to come to Québec by supporting them upon their arrival, and by helping them enter the job market in order to make it easier for them to contribute to future generations of entrepreneurs. All these measures should foster a harmonious coexistence. In fact, demographic growth will depend more and more on international immigration in the coming years. It is necessary, however, to find a happy medium between the needs related to Québec's demographic situation and its ability to equitably integrate immigrants. The economy must be prosperous and offer job and business opportunities.

The demographic circumstances described above are not all negative by any means. In fact, they offer a large number of people the opportunity to become permanently employed, particularly those who are presently excluded, and also to qualify or requalify for sectors in demand.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In several regions, the number of work-aged people has significantly decreased in recent years. According to the Institut de la statistique du Québec, this decrease could affect all of Québec by 2032. If nothing is done and assuming that all other production factors remain the same, such a decrease could cause a drop in the standard of living and a decrease in public funds at a time when the government will be facing an increase in public expenditures. Also, it is imperative that the potential impacts of an aging population be offset by a broad range of measures to develop jobs, increase productivity and increase the gross domestic product per capita. Repaying the public debt is also essential to be able to secure public funds for future generations.

To reach these objectives, the focus must be placed on increasing investments in key areas, on new information and communication technologies, and on emerging activities. This would stimulate exchanges between the central regions and resource regions, and Québec could carve out a place of choice as a world-class producer of goods and services.

The Québec Advantage

The Québec Advantage – Québec Government's Economic Development Strategy aims to improve the standard of living of Quebecers. Focusing on wealth creation, the strategy is centred on nine major advantages of Québec's economy: competitive business environment, investment-friendly economic conditions, leading role in research and innovation, skilled labour force, SMEs at the heart of economic development, an export-based economy, well-established key sectors, abundant and renewable energy resources and dynamic, innovative regions.

Employment: a passport to the future

In Québec, as elsewhere, employment is a key means of social and professional integration and promotes wealth creation. In this light, the *Government Employment Plan* targets job creation, improving the qualifications of its labour force and ongoing development of skills. It also aims to integrate the available labour force and keep it employed, including workers outside the job market, and economic and regional development.

Québec's economic development, however, must continue to rely on the tremendous potential of its natural resources and land, while protecting the environment and ensuring the longevity of its resources. In this regard, the experience of local populations and traditional knowledge and know-how are important assets.

The Generations Fund

The Act respecting Debt Reduction and Instituting the Generations Fund provided Québec with a permanent tool and strategy to reduce the debt. The legislation stipulates revenue sources dedicated exclusively to debt repayment without raising taxes. Water, a part of Quebecers' natural wealth, will be the basic component of the financing of the *Generations Fund*, in particular through water-power royalties paid by Hydro-Québec.

Proposed objectives

- 13. Improve the demographic profile of Québec and its regions.**
- 14. Focus on family life and facilitate conciliation of work, school and personal life.**
- 15. Increase standard of living.**
- 16. Increase productivity and quality of jobs using measures that are ecologically and socially responsible.**
- 17. Provide future generations with public health funding.**



Direction 6

Practice integrated, sustainable land use and development

The government must encourage a balanced approach to land use and development in Québec, while considering community aspirations, regional particularities, cultural features, protection of natural habitats and investment opportunities. Integrated land development is also based on the abundance and diversity of natural resources in Québec's regions. Promoting these resources hinges upon the realization of wealth generating and mobilizing projects for the regions' populations. This development must be stimulated while preserving the integrity of the landscape and agricultural potential, maintaining biodiversity, limiting the negative effects of resource use and urban sprawl and protecting the watersheds. Protecting the cultural and social heritage and reducing urban sprawl must be an ongoing concern. The disparity of development between the regions and the consequences of this imbalance on the population are also a concern. The situation requires various actions to ensure the growth of all the regions. *Subsidiarity, protection of cultural heritage, biodiversity preservation, environmental protection, health and quality of life and respect for ecosystem support capacity* are some of the principles addressed here.

Thus, efforts to deliver services as close as possible to the citizens and strengthen local democracy bring decision-making closer to the regions' populations. Also, all communities, including rural communities, must have the means to act to implement projects designed to improve their living conditions.

The Projet gouvernemental d'autonomie régionale et municipale et la ruralité

As part of the *Forum des Générations*, the government concluded two protocol agreements; the first with municipal associations for decentralization towards the municipalities and the second with the *Conférences régionales des élus (CRÉ)* for the purpose of fostering economic, social and cultural development in the regions. Implementation of these protocols will continue under a government project for regional and municipal autonomy. In other respects, the national rural policy gives rural areas the means to ensure harmonious development of their communities. The rural pact, a key component of the policy, brings together the elected members of rural areas and government in a joint commitment to invest and innovate to build a prosperous rural environment that meets the expectations of the population.



Land use and development must also include disaster planning, which helps create an environment conducive to investment and business development. By keeping populations and property from being exposed to dangerous phenomena – land slides, flooding or industrial accidents – direct control is exercised over the potential effects of catastrophes. Keeping this concern in mind ensures the safety and sustainable well-being of the populations as well as the perenniality of past and future investments.

With a view to subsidiarity, it is necessary to pursue and step up the application of conditions facilitating the sharing of responsibilities and active participation of regional and local interests as well as those of the Native communities in their own development. It is also necessary to distribute investments fairly and efficiently in consideration of each region's aspirations and potential and the will of all stakeholders.

Land use and regional development

The county regional municipalities (CRMs) act as government representatives in matters pertaining to land use. They have the task of setting up a land use and development plan that includes a strategic vision of cultural, economic, environmental and social development intended to facilitate the coherent use of their skills while taking the government directions into account.

The Conférence régionales des élus (CRE) is the government's representative in matters pertaining to regional development. Their mandate includes setting up a five-year development plan that defines general and specific objectives for the region's development within the perspective of sustainable development.

Sustainable land use and development implies complementarity between actions to protect and make the most of the environment and cultural heritage, social progress and economic development. Such an approach recognizes the importance of the role of communities and partnerships. The actions of the different players (RCM, CRE, regional commissions, ...) translate into various planning and implementation tools (five-year development plans, regional or local sustainable development strategies, land use and management plans, Agenda 21, ...). Linkage and coherency between these tools and the Government Sustainable Development Strategy are essential to a sustainable development undertaking.

Protection of farmland

The activities of the Commission de protection du territoire agricole guarantee use and development of farming activities for future generations. In this capacity, it protects farmland and contributes to bringing this objective to the heart of local concerns. As a rare and non-renewable resource, farmland is the foundation of an important part of Québec's economy and that of its regions. It is also where many of Québec's citizens make their home and the setting for a variety of economic, social and cultural activities.

INTEGRATED LAND MANAGEMENT

Integrated land management is a comprehensive approach that consists in the management of natural, cultural, human and financial resources, the risks that are present and development projects. This approach, which takes social, environmental and economic issues into account, must be adopted by all decision-making levels in order for development initiatives to be efficient and coherent.

It is therefore essential to broaden and disseminate knowledge of the land and its features, and properly understand the issues linked to economic development and the resources to be protected. Access to reliable and up-to-date geographical and land information enables developers to direct and plan development in accordance with sustainable development principles.

Moreover, citizens must play a larger role in the decision-making process to enable local and regional specificities and aspirations to be taken into account. Adoption of local or regional sustainable development strategies – local or regional action plans or Agenda 21 initiatives – together with the Government Sustainable Development Strategy helps to implement integrated management in regional and local administrations and Native communities. Over the years, new elements (strategic vision at the regional level, the action plan and monitoring in cities) were integrated into land planning documents produced by the metropolitan communities, the RCMs and municipalities in such manner that these tools increasingly take the challenges of sustainable development into account.

It is imperative that a vision of sustainable development guide regional and local planning initiatives as they are being renewed. On a territorial level, application of management plans for residual materials, watershed management, forest management, and wildlife, wetlands, protected areas and landscape management are some of the actions that can facilitate the integration of sustainable development requirements.

Integrated water management, a sustainable development approach

Integrated water management contributes to sustainable development because it enables water-related policies, programs, projects and plans to be cohesively managed. Whether it is drinking water, infrastructures, protection of the ecosystems, tourism or industrial and agricultural development, water is an irreplaceable component of sustainable development for the benefit of future generations. Watershed organizations are the key players of integrated water management at the watershed level. This type of organization is made up of representatives of all stakeholders and users of the water of a given watershed. They consist of planning and discussion groups that receive government support. Their first mandate consists in developing a master plan for water that provides a portrait and diagnosis of the watershed, the issues, the directions and the objectives to be reached as well as an action plan.

Integrated water management helps local communities take their development in hand. Empowerment is a process by which a person, group or community succeeds in having a degree of control over their living conditions.

Integrated and regionalized management of natural resources and the land

The integrated and regionalized management of natural resources and land adopted by the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune is based among other things on the actions of regional commissions created for this purpose. With the active participation of the Conférences régionales des élus and interested Native communities, these commissions are active in forestry, wildlife, mines, energy and land. Their key mandate consists in producing an integrated development plan for regional resources and land that reflects regional particularities and priorities. Thus, they can respond to the expectations of regional stakeholders who wish to actively participate in the development of their territory and take on more responsibility in this regard.

IMPROVING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Improving the quality of human settlements¹⁵, municipalities, cities and villages, requires an integrated approach that considers the numerous interactions inherent to all living environments. The quality of life of human settlements today is an appealing factor that fosters their development and competitiveness. The choice of a sustainable development model implies the adoption of practices and implementation of actions that contribute to ensuring the viability and quality of human settlements. Habitat, the circulation of humans and property, the design of space, infrastructures and equipment, services and activities, social relations and cultural life are some of the elements that contribute to creating and maintaining the quality of life of individuals, families and populations.

Landscape conservation

The landscape is of increasing interest in Québec and instrumentation is being developed in this field to provide local populations with the tools to improve conservation and develop rural and urban landscapes. The result of a joint initiative of several departments and public agencies, the *Estran* project in Gaspésie aims to establish the operating conditions for the status of *man-made landscape* defined by the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*. The project uses an innovative approach to landscape management based on accountability, joint effort and participation of administrative partners and local populations that enable the limits of coercive measures to be surpassed.

Knowledge of the state of the living environment is important. It is also necessary to consolidate existing urban zones and as far as possible confine peripheral urban sprawl of these zones to areas that already have infrastructures and services. Such an approach serves to preserve natural ecosystems, landscapes and land suitable for farming and recreation.

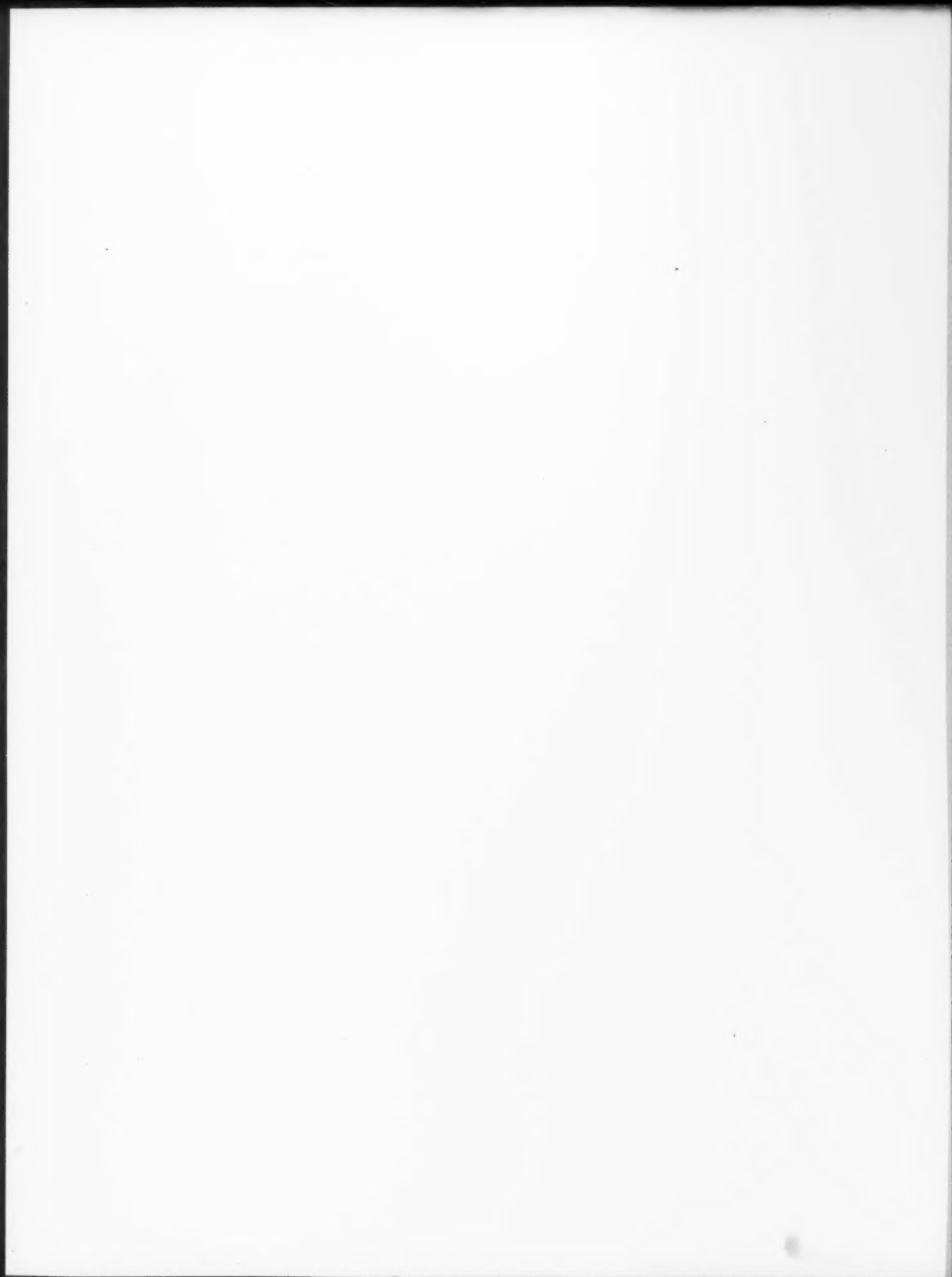
It is also necessary to optimize investments in infrastructures, equipment and services and to locate them in settings in such manner as to maximize use and efficiency.

Finally, the population must have access to quality public services in keeping with the government's financial capacity and regional contingencies. The population must be better informed on the nature and availability of these services.

Proposed objectives

- 18. Integrate the imperatives of sustainable development in regional and local strategies and design and development plans.**
- 19. Strengthen the viability and resilience of urban, rural or territorial communities and native communities.**
- 20. Ensure fair and efficient access to basic services according to regional and local realities.**

¹⁵ "A whole encompassing a community, its habitat and its activities" in a single unit, Office québécois de la langue française. The Rio Summit commits governments to implement concrete actions to promote a viable human settlement model.



Direction 7

Preserve and share the collective heritage

A society's wealth is measured by the quality of its natural capital (environment, natural resources, biodiversity), by the diversity and scope of its social capital (social networks and related reciprocity standards¹⁶) and cultural capital (institutions, human resources, and cultural heritage and installations) as well as by its economic capital (infrastructures, debt, GDP, productivity, etc). To ensure the welfare of future generations it can be agreed that today's decisions, particularly those involving culture, heritage assets, land use and resource use (natural, human and financial) must be socially, economically and ecologically responsible. The principles addressed here are *inter-governmental partnership and cooperation, precaution, protection of cultural heritage, biodiversity preservation, prevention and respect for ecosystem support capacity*.

Assets must be preserved and practices that make up the identity of a society kept alive so that everyone may benefit. It is also a question of protecting and developing the natural heritage in keeping with the support capacity of ecosystems. A society's culture is fashioned over a long period according to the diversity of its environment and the interaction between natural and human forces.

MANAGEMENT OF THE COLLECTIVE HERITAGE

Ecological, cultural, scientific and economic heritage is a source of well-being and prosperity. In a perspective of sustainable development, it is vital to consider it as a legacy to pass on to future generations and to manage it adequately. A sustainable development initiative, demographic challenges, the state of resource stocks, and the fragility of our environments and ecosystems—are some of the opportunities to reflect on the components of our collective heritage from which future generations are entitled to benefit: our lakes, our forests, our landscapes, our culture, our democratic practices, our institutions, etc., in keeping with an ever-increasing number of events, meetings and studies, are examples of the elements proclaimed as being part of our collective heritage.



It is also preferable to use non-renewable resources with caution and to use renewable resources without compromising their regeneration. In fact, development activities of all types and use of agricultural, forest, aquatic and mining resources must respect the support capacity of ecosystems. It is also essential to ensure the development, survival and transfer of local and traditional knowledge and practices that contribute to maintaining and improving quality of life.

The Québec Biodiversity Strategy

The fruit of the combined effort and collaboration of over twenty departments, public agencies and NGOs, the *Québec Biodiversity Strategy* covers all facets of the conservation of Québec's natural heritage. It provides for the consolidation of a network of protected areas that are representative of biodiversity, measures to protect threatened or vulnerable species, and consideration of biodiversity in the planning or realization of activities related to the development and use of resources. The strategy ensures also that biodiversity objectives are integrated into government commitments bearing on genetically modified organisms, climate change, water management and environmental and civil security.

16 Putnam, Robert, "Social Capital Measurement and Consequences", *Isma* vol. 2, no. 1, 2001.

If we wish to rise to the challenge of preserving and promoting our cultural heritage, we must give ourselves the means to preserve those elements that bear witness to a rich and unique history for the benefit of current and future generations. The government wishes to step up support to safeguard and promote our collective heritage.

The Québec Cultural Heritage Fund

Administered by the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, the *Québec Cultural Heritage Fund* aims to support the restoration and development of significant elements of the cultural heritage, particularly those protected by the municipalities. It combines actions to protect the built and artistic heritage with activities highlighting the built heritage that will enable knowledge of the heritage to be developed through the contribution of Québec's museums.

COOPERATION

Countries are increasingly interdependent. Pollution knows no boundaries and the globalization of trade is leading to a redefinition of social ills that can no longer be ignored. The shared responsibility of peoples in the face of social, environmental and economic challenges relies on cooperation. Thus, the implementation of economic measures that take environmental and social factors into account requires joint effort by business partners. It is necessary to take action and work together to advance ideas and practices, and to resolve problems through innovation and prevention. As an example, fair trade creates the conditions needed to preserve the environment, and ensure social equity and a better distribution of wealth.

Québec is not among the major supporters of international aid. However, it does contribute directly to the solidarity efforts carried out by French-speaking countries and works with a number of developing countries. For Québec, this practice is the direct consequence of its role on the international scene. Promoting and defending its interests results in the obligation to assist its partners with whom it shares this international place. In the years to come, the challenge will be to target its actions in areas where it can be most effective and useful to the international community.

Québec's International Policy

Québec's International Policy highlights the importance of conducting joint action among the Québec government's departments and agencies as well as the federal government and those abroad to act more efficiently on the international scene. It identifies international solidarity efforts as one of the government's key international affairs objectives.

Now and in future, Québec must continue talks with its neighbours and partners and participate in international debates. It has a responsibility to take part in the development of underprivileged nations. In this respect, programs for cooperation and international solidarity are an ideal venue, particularly with other governments, international government agencies and NGOs, and particularly among French-speaking countries.

An international agreement for the sustainable development of the Great Lakes Basin and St. Lawrence River

An agreement on the water resources of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River was concluded between Québec, Ontario, and the eight Great Lake states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin). The ten governments agreed to act jointly to step up protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River waters within the perspective of sustainable development. The agreement aims to ensure the perennality of water resources for future generations by combining environment protection, integrity of the resource, and economic and social development.

Proposed objectives

- 21. Strengthen conservation and development of the cultural and scientific heritage.**
- 22. Ensure the protection and development of the natural heritage and resources in keeping with the support capacity of ecosystems.**
- 23. Step up cooperation among national and international partners on integrated sustainable development projects.**

Direction 8

Promote social involvement

Getting more citizens to participate in collective life and in solving the problems that affect them enables Québec to progress. Individuals and communities who take part in collective life contribute more to improving the population's quality of life. Getting people involved in their common interests within their communities is based on community organization and action. Such action must draw from the communities and reach out to local and regional areas. The principles addressed here are *participation and commitment, inter-governmental partnership and cooperation and social equity and solidarity*.

Implementation of sustainable development invariably includes seeking the best compromise from among various social, environmental and economic impacts. This approach is firmly based on consensus seeking, whereby it is through this exercise and not an attempt to reach full consensus at all costs that enriches the decision-making process and enables development choices that take all interests into consideration.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Social, environmental and economic community action is a factor in cohesion and security. Based above all on values of mutual aid, solidarity and development of collective capacities rather than on commercial ties, community action improves the lives of people and their families in a sustainable way by helping them make the most of their potential. It makes participation easier for those who are less active on the job market and who are retired.

Community action is a collective action based on solidarity, democracy, equity and autonomy. Ultimately, it aims for social development and is inherent in organizations working to improve the social fabric and living conditions and to develop the potential of individuals and communities. These agencies respond to the needs expressed by citizens who have a mutual problem or who share a common goal of well-being. Community action has a capacity for innovation. It takes on various forms of intervention and is characterized by an organizational mode that favours an associational approach based on citizen participation and deliberation.



Through their dynamic of individual and collective undertaking, community-based organizations create venues for involvement and participation in the life of a community. To achieve their goal of improving living conditions, community action organizations must take different points of view into account and receive the knowledge and expertise of each and all. The vision of these organizations in many ways resembles the vision underlying the tenets of sustainable development. Their expertise deserves consideration by the various decision-making and consultation bodies.

DEMOCRATIC LIFE

Participation of the citizenry in the democratic process is also a fundamental commitment for communities. Participatory democracy and democratic governance¹⁷ enable the opinions, knowledge and expertise of citizens to be taken into account regarding their own living environments. Through the democratic process, this expertise enriches decision-making on projects or directions that concern them, particularly when it is acquired early on in the consultation process.

17 In pursuit of socio-ecological civility and democratic governance, the authors propose encouraging individuals, collectivities and other decision-making bodies at the collective level to develop their capacity, motivation and tendency to implement perennality-based requirements through more accessible and better informed debate, greater attention to mutual awareness and accountability and, finally, increased integration of decision-making, administrative, market, customary and individual practices. (Robert B. Gibson, Selma Hassan, Suzan Holtz, James Tansey and Graham Whitelaw, *Sustainability Assessment – Criteria, Processes and Applications*, London: Earthscan, 2005).

The principle of *involvement and commitment* stipulates that citizens and the groups representing them are necessary in defining a common vision of development and ensuring its environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Action 21, the plan adopted in Rio in 1992, endeavours to ensure that economic, social and environmental considerations are integrated into all levels of the decision-making process and in all sectors of government, and also to ensure that the public has access to relevant information. It asks that the public be easily able to express its views and participate effectively. In its chapter on strengthening the role of groups, it is indicated that a key element critical to the implementation of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making, among other reasons to know about and participate in decisions, particularly those having an effect on the communities in which they live and work.

The Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) – a tool of participatory democracy and sustainable development

For over a quarter of a century, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) has acted as a catalyst for public participation in government decision-making. Tasked with informing and consulting the citizenry on projects likely to have an impact on their quality of life, the BAPE takes their concerns and opinions into consideration in its reports in order that the citizens' expertise contribute to improving projects and enriching the decision-making process.

Each BAPE commission examines projects in light of all its biophysical, social, economic and cultural aspects. The BAPE has contributed to the dynamics of Québec and social debates that have served to establish a new environmental governance that gives the citizens and organizations of Québec's society the latitude to express themselves. Over 100,000 people have taken part in BAPE sessions with the public. When the National Assembly celebrated the BAPE's 25th anniversary, it reiterated its commitment to the principles of environmental protection, sustainable development and participatory democracy.

Proposed objectives

24. Increase citizens' involvement in their community.

25. Increase consideration for the concerns of citizens in decisions.

Direction 9

Prevent and reduce social and economic inequality

Preventing and reducing social and economic inequality is at the very heart of sustainable development, as are economic efficiency and public participation. For example, the OECD demonstrates the inextricable nature of poverty reduction, economic growth and protection of environmental resources within a perspective of sustainable development. Elimination of poverty is in fact an objective that is closely linked to other strategic objectives of the international community, particularly maintaining global peace and stability. The principles addressed here are *social equity and solidarity, inter-governmental partnership and cooperation and economic efficiency.*

These inequalities call on all of society's players in the face of the importance of narrowing the gaps between individuals (notably between women and men), families (dual and single parent families) and communities (notably Québec society and Native communities). Action must also be taken to give children and their families better equality of opportunity. For example, all organizations should include gender-differentiated analysis¹⁸ in their management in order to move our society toward the targeted objective of equality.

Significant efforts have already been made to reduce social and economic inequality and manage social problems that marginalized communities share with Québec's population. Québec's situation¹⁹ is already remarkable, notably for its assistance for low-income workers, higher levels of funding for education, skills and training development, childcare services and early childhood education, healthcare and homecare, social assistance and protection, and affordable housing. Measures designed to fight poverty (income supplements, access to public services, etc.) improve the living conditions of vulnerable workers through training, social and legal protection, minimum wage, etc.

Our society values the environment, social equity and economic efficiency and wishes to contribute to sustainable development. Participation in collective life is greatly aided by, among other things, access to jobs and the acquisition and upgrading of knowledge and skills that contribute to sustainable development.



EQUITY

Across Québec, economic development is also intricately linked with social and cultural development. The State's intervention in this context enables a better distribution of wealth. The involvement of all players in society's development is largely the result of the levels of social justice, cultural diversity and economic equity—interrelated values that are responsible for social cohesion. The greater the divide between individuals, families, rich and poor communities, the more social cohesion is jeopardized. The socioeconomic level is a major factor in health and well-being. Poverty must be reduced, while emphasis is placed on the pooling of resources from the public, community and private sectors.

¹⁸ Gender-differentiated analysis is a management technique that clarifies the decision-making process by taking into account the distinctive effects that any decision may have on men and women. It supports public intervention by respecting equality among all Quebecers.

¹⁹ See "Risk and Opportunity: Creating Options for Vulnerable Workers" by Ron Saunders of the Canadian Policy Research Networks, January 2006.

A plan of action to fight poverty and social exclusion

The *Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion* is based on respect for the dignity of people and aims to give each and all equality of opportunity in life. It is part of an overall vision of the role we must play collectively to assist the less fortunate and most vulnerable. The action plan is made up of a series of measures aimed at improving the disposable income of low-income households. These measures meet the requirements of the government action plan described in the *Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Social integration is a principle of equity by which everyone participates according to their ability in the development of society's environmental, social and economic dimensions. It is a factor of social cohesion that favours personal and collective fulfillment. The sustainability of any development process is based on the capacity of each to recognize his or her inherent role.

Employment is a key vector of social integration. It gives people autonomy and allows a society to progress. The capacity of people to remain employed or find new employment today increasingly requires a high school diploma at least, recognition of adult skills or the opportunity to take ongoing training. The government estimates that it is also important to help immigrants, members of cultural communities and the disabled to enter the job market.

Having access to knowledge and learning throughout one's lifetime is one of the recognized conditions of cultural, social and economic development. It allows for the sustainable fight against poverty and social exclusion while increasing a society's skills, skills that are indispensable to economic growth and protection of the environment.

Prejudice and discrimination are important obstacles to the integration of individuals or groups of individuals into the normal activity of society. If recognition of racism and discrimination is the first step toward seeking solutions to the various related problems, the fight against prejudice and discrimination, whether direct, indirect or systemic, is a collective responsibility. The government is concerned with the recognition of and fight against racism and discrimination which are concrete manifestations of the implementation of *social equity and solidarity* set forth by the Act.

A sector in full growth, social economy plays an important socioeconomic role. It brings services closer to the communities and, notably, favours social and economic insertion of marginalized people and those outside the job market.

Social economy at the service of sustainable development

Social economy provides original, adapted answers to the needs of communities who are not well served by the traditional economy. It is both a tool for social development, since it offers new services and improves the quality of life of people, and an economic tool that creates sustainable employment. Because of their democratic mode of operating, social economy enterprises promote development of the citizenry and social values. They also contribute to improving the quality of life of people and make access to services easier. This sector includes all enterprises with a collective entrepreneurial vocation: cooperatives, mutual insurance companies, non-profit organizations in the merchant sector, independent community organizations. The Québec government supports their development, particularly for individual services (homecare and childcare centres), community housing, social tourism and the environment.

Proposed objectives

- 26. Prevent and fight poverty and social exclusion.**
- 27. Increase schooling, number of graduates and the population's qualification.**
- 28. Increase participation in ongoing training activities and manpower qualification.**
- 29. Support initiatives of the social economy sector aimed at the sustainable integration of people outside the job market.**

Mechanisms and means for implementation, monitoring and evaluation

In accordance with the *Sustainable Development Act*, the strategy must adopt monitoring mechanisms. **These mechanisms guarantee that the strategy will be quickly transformed into concrete actions.**

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the sustainable development strategy will be based on mechanisms and means that foster synergy of action and collegial (between all partners) and transversal (in all sectors) work. By this, the government wishes its sustainable development strategy to considerably improve the quality of life of the entire population with a view to equity for future generations.

Successful implementation of the sustainable development strategy depends above all on the degree of involvement of all its departments, agencies and enterprises. They are responsible for taking part in its implementation by carrying out concerted sectorial actions within their fields of expertise. Eventually, the educational, health and social services establishments and municipal organizations will be asked to contribute to the spinoffs.

Strategy Implementation – Conditions for Success

1. The quest for sustainable development, while prompted by the management framework imposed by the *Sustainable Development Act* on the public service, must translate into participation by all players of society. Within a medium- and long-term perspective, sustainable development cannot therefore be the prerogative of a department or public apparatus alone; among other things, it requires the creation of partnerships likely to result in structuring, inspiring interventions from the component elements of Québec society.
2. The firm will of government to bring coherence to its sustainable development actions means that it must structure coordination, monitoring, consultation, coaching and awareness raising activities for all government departments, agencies and enterprises targeted by the *Sustainable Development Act*. The *Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs*, as required by the Act, will coordinate and provide the support required by this coordination.
3. The objectives of the Act will be attained if all State departments and agencies have the will and capacity to reconsider, review and adjust the laws, regulations, policies and programs they administer, as well as their intervention instruments, in consideration of the principles of sustainable development set forth by the Act. To this end, they must set priorities and plan their actions in accordance with the Government Sustainable Development Strategy. The new mandates assigned to the *Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs* must not translate into direct intervention in the spheres of activity and with the clienteles of the departments and agencies, which remain fully responsible while being asked to increase the coherence and synergy of their respective interventions.
4. Even if several societies have committed themselves to sustainable development, the multiplicity of tools and the nature of current experiences must not overshadow the complexity and scope of the task ahead. While constantly acquiring and adapting the successes achieved elsewhere, we must learn from the mistakes that have been made and benefit from the successes, while devoting significant effort to the development of analysis grids and tools adapted to our reality and needs. Specific tools must be developed by the sectors where they are applied. To ensure coherence and validity, however, they must be part of a coordinated and integrated approach.

The private sector, NGOs and society in general are also concerned by the strategy. In this regard, the government departments and agencies will involve their partners and clientele in the planning and implementation of sustainable development actions that meet the strategy's objectives as well as the particular issues of their area of intervention. Government actions inherently have a direct effect on the population, the parapublic sector and the private sector which will, in fact, be invited to contribute, through their interventions, to reaching the objectives of the strategy. Citizen involvement and support of the strategy represent one of the important conditions of success.

To have the points of view of the Native communities heard, the government will also ensure that First Nations are consulted in compliance with its constitutional obligations.

Mechanisms provided for by law

SCHEDULE

The *Sustainable Development Act* stipulates that the government must revise the sustainable development strategy every five years, a period that the government may extend by two years. Between these periods, the government may decide to make any changes to the strategy if they serve to better promote the viability of development. Once the strategy is adopted, all government departments and agencies will have to draw up their action plans. Before revising the strategy, the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks will prepare an implementation schedule in cooperation with the other departments and agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION

The role of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks

The Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks is designated by the *Sustainable Development Act* to coordinate the drafting, renewal and revision of the strategy's various components.

Moreover, under the Act, the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs must promote sustainable development within the public service and the general public. It must also provide its expertise and collaboration to help achieve the strategy's objectives and ensure compliance with and implementation of the principles of sustainable development.

An assistant deputy minister for sustainable development was appointed to help exercise this responsibility and a special unit, the Bureau de coordination du développement durable, was set up for this purpose.

The role of the other government departments and agencies

The *Sustainable Development Act* indicates that all government departments and agencies must participate in drawing up, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the sustainable development strategy. The Comité interministériel du développement durable will acquire the mechanisms to supervise the steps of the strategy's implementation.

Each government department and agency must also specify in their respective action plans and make public the specific objectives they intend to reach to progressively apply the strategy while taking into account the principles of sustainable development in their areas of expertise. They must also indicate what activities they intend to carry out to reach their objectives and what means they will use to measure to what extent they have been reached. Finally, they must report the results each year.

MONITORING

Periodical reports

Under the *Sustainable Development Act*, the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks must coordinate periodical reports and prepare a report at least every five years on the strategy's implementation in cooperation with the other departments concerned. In accordance with the Act, the strategy must also provide for the adoption of monitoring mechanisms.

Projected mechanisms may be of two types:

- 1 a mechanism to monitor and measure the "administrative" performance of the government apparatus (for example, the number of actions carried out);
- 2 a mechanism enabling a link to be made between the results attained by the departments and agencies, strategy's objectives and progression of sustainable development in Québec measured using sustainable development indicators.

A team from the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs will be charged with monitoring the strategy's implementation. In a timely fashion, it will review the strategy in cooperation and coordinated with all the other departments and agencies.

Annual management reports and annual activity reports

In accordance with the *Sustainable Development Act*, each government department and agency will report the following in a special section of its annual activity report:

- 1 particular objectives they have set, following those of the strategy to contribute to sustainable development and the progressive application of the strategy or, if applicable, the reasons why no particular objective was identified for the year given the content of the adopted strategy;
- 2 different activities or interventions they may or may not have carried out during the year to reach the objectives, as well as the degree to which the results were achieved by listing the selected indicators;
- 3 if applicable, measures they took following comments or recommendations made by the sustainable development commissioner.

Sustainable development indicators

The *Sustainable Development Act* gives the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks the task, in cooperation with the other departments, to draw up an initial list of overall indicators serving to build a dynamic profile of Québec's environment, society and economy and assess Québec's progress in sustainable development.

The choice and design of indicators will be done with the participation of the Institut de la statistique du Québec and in cooperation with the departments and agencies concerned. Under the Act, these indicators will be submitted to a public consultation as part of a parliamentary commission.

EVALUATION AND CONTROL

Sustainable development commissioner²⁰

Reporting to and appointed by the Auditor General of Québec with the consent of the Office of the National Assembly, the Sustainable Development Commissioner has the mission to verify and evaluate the progress made by the public service in reaching the objectives and to ensure sustainable development. The commissioner must examine the sustainable development strategy and monitoring indicators, and examine and verify the reports that must be submitted to him by the public service.

Each year, the commissioner will submit a report to the government, which will also be made public, on the different activities carried out by the public service within the scope of the sustainable development strategy's implementation. To this end, the commissioner may conduct investigations and ask the departments, agencies and other entities of the public service to produce all reports and provide additional specifications on activities they may have carried out in their areas of expertise.

Other measures facilitating the strategy's implementation

In addition to the mechanisms provided for by the Act, the existing committees and agencies will be asked to contribute and there will be other measures to facilitate implementation of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy.

INVOLVEMENT OF KEY PLAYERS

Permanent departmental committees

Three permanent departmental committees, whose mandate is to ensure government coherence at the highest level, are bound to advise the Cabinet on the meeting of objectives. They convey projects submitted by the departments and agencies and are part of the government's bid to implement sustainable development in all its actions. These committees are the Comité ministériel de la prospérité économique et du développement durable, the Comité ministériel du développement social, éducatif et culturel and the Comité ministériel à la décentralisation et aux régions.

Comité interministériel du développement durable (CIDD)

Presided over by the ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, the Comité interministériel du développement durable brings together representatives of twenty-two departments and certain agencies concerned with integrating sustainable development into their activities. It is first and foremost a forum for discussion, information exchanges and promotion of sustainable development. It supports, accompanies and advises the ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs in its mission to promote sustainable development within the Québec government by promoting cooperation and harmonization with the various interventions.

It helps coordinate the strategy's monitoring and implementation as well as the production of periodical progress reports and implementation reports required under the *Sustainable Development Act*.

To the exclusion of municipal agencies and educational, health and social services establishments, nearly one hundred and sixty departments and agencies make up Québec's public service.

Other mechanisms complementary to the activities of the Comité interministériel de développement durable will be quickly implemented so that all government agencies fully participate in the government strategy's application, strive to reach its objectives and help carry out other measures and objectives of the Act in matters pertaining to measurement indicators, reporting mechanisms and the promotion of sustainable development.

Municipal agencies, educational, health and social services establishments

The *Sustainable Development Act* stipulates that a government decree is required to determine the date on which one or more provisions of the Act may apply to these agencies and establishments, taking the necessary adaptations into account. The government intends to consult the representatives of the agencies concerned to reach an agreement on the terms and schedule for any measure arising from the Act or the strategy that could have significant impacts on them.

Again, the Act stipulates that these agencies and establishments may voluntarily disclose the objectives and interventions they have planned in their areas of expertise and according to their attributions in order to contribute to sustainable development and implementation of the government strategy.

Initially, the government intends to invite the educational, health and social services establishments and municipal agencies to voluntarily make public, within twenty-four months following adoption of the strategy, a first report on their contribution to the objectives of sustainable development, by reporting their most successful initiatives and exemplary practices. For example, the Brundtland Green Schools²¹ could report the status of their contribution to sustainable development and invite other establishments to join them in their initiative.

The government could also encourage sustainable development undertakings within targeted agencies and establishments.

21 Nearly 1000 elementary and secondary schools and colleges in Québec have obtained Brundtland Green Establishment status for their actions centred around the themes of environment, democracy, sharing, cooperation, equity, solidarity, respect, peace and human rights, which are highlighted in the Brundtland Report *Our Common Future*.

TRAINING AND DECISION-MAKING AIDS

Working closely with all departments and agencies, the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs will propose various complementary information, awareness raising, training and accompaniment activities on implementation of the sustainable development initiative for targeted classes of public service personnel. Among other things, these activities will target the content, application and monitoring of the Act and the government Sustainable Development Strategy.

The government also intends to promote, develop and use analysis grids and other methodological tools to be ready to better integrate sustainable development into its decisions. Decision-making aids will also be promoted to encourage the personnel concerned to use them. For example, with respect to requests for financial assistance submitted to them, analysts of the departments and agencies will soon have an evaluation grid for the principles set forth in the governmental *Sustainable Development Act*.

Each department and organization will also ensure that measures are implemented so that their personnel gets involved in the sustainable development action plan's realization.

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN

Québec's sustainable development initiative is relying on information, awareness, consultation and the commitment of all players concerned within government and society. The government in cooperation with all departments and agencies will prepare a communication and public information plan bearing on the content and implementation of the sustainable development strategy and on sectoral achievements contributing to its success.

Interactive information system

As part of the Government On-line initiative, Portail Québec, the Québec government's Web site will facilitate consultation on sustainable development. Portail Québec will provide information on topics related to the approach and enable visitors to submit comments and suggestions. Anyone wanting clarification on the government's performance on the sustainable development strategy may submit their questions to the departments and agencies concerned.

The communication and public information plan will use the various means of communication to deliver messages on a broad scale. Initially it will integrate messages, content and feedback mechanisms in the programs, campaigns, activities and regular information tools of each department and agency.

Sustainable development forums

When the reports on the implementation of the government sustainable development strategy are published, the government plans to give the population the opportunity to debate and discuss the progress that has been made and the difficulties encountered in the sustainable development implementation initiative.

Implementation plan for the Government Sustainable Development Plan

Immediately upon the strategy's formal adoption, to ensure the quick and ordered implementation of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy throughout the public service, the government will have:

- Supplied an action plan guide describing the suggested practices, imperatives created by the strategy and minimal monitoring and reporting conditions, and provided training to the staff concerned on its implementation;
- Strengthened the role and operations of the Comité interministériel du développement durable and implemented networking mechanisms for all agencies addressed by the *Sustainable Development Act*;
- Adopted a mechanism to monitor the departments' and agencies' strategy implementation operations;
- Planned the implementation, immediately following the strategy's adoption, of broad intersectoral projects for some of the directions, to create the synergy needed for the strategy's implementation;
- Agreed on a vision for sustainable development information, awareness raising and training measures, with regard to aspects and activities held in common by the public service personnel or classes of personnel;
- Implemented a sustainable development monitoring mechanism focusing on capacity building of agencies by giving them access to strategic, structured information;
- Developed an enriched and reviewed version of the principles of sustainable development described in the Act to make it easier for departments and agencies to incorporate into their actions;
- Formalized an agreement with the Institut de la statistique du Québec on mechanisms of collaboration pertaining to sustainable development indicators and other monitoring measures.

Appendix I

Addressing required issues

The *Sustainable Development Act* requires the following issues to be addressed in the first version of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy. These issues are covered in the sections indicated below.

ISSUES	CORRESPONDING SECTIONS
1. The sustainable development information and education measures to be implemented, in particular for certain classes of public service personnel.	<p>Direction 1, Objectives 1 and 2 Direction 2, Objective 4 Direction 3, Objective 10 Direction 4, Objective 11</p> <p>Implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and means – Training and decision-making tools – Communication and public information plan</p>
2. The development of tools or models for the design, determination and analysis of projects in terms of sustainable development, among other things to take into account all the principles of sustainable development or to implement approaches related to those principles, in particular concerning the life cycle of products and services.	<p>Direction 3, Objectives 6 and 9 Direction 4, Objective 12 Direction 5, Objective 16</p> <p>Implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and means – Training and decision-making tools</p>
3. The mechanisms in place to encourage input from the various stakeholders in society.	<p>Direction 8, Objectives 24 and 25 Direction 9, Objectives 26, 27, 28 and 29</p> <p>Implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and means – Communication and public information plan</p>
4. The means selected to foster an integrated approach and the coherence of the various interventions undertaken in the area of sustainable development by the local and regional authorities concerned, including those undertaken by Native communities.	<p>Direction 6, Objectives 18, 19 and 20</p> <p>Implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and means – Involvement of key players</p>

Appendix 2

Government Sustainable Development Strategy – summary table

VISION

Section 2 of the Act defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is based on a long-term approach which takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities". This definition translates into the following vision of sustainable

development proposed by the government: **"A society in which the citizen's quality of life is and remains a reality. A responsible, innovative society able to excel in all its achievements. A society based on harmony between economic vitality, environmental quality and social equity."** For the Québec government, sustainable development is a dynamic and fundamental guiding force.

ISSUES

Issue 1: **Develop knowledge**

Issue 2: **Promote responsible action**

Issue 3: **Foster commitment**

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Under the *Sustainable Development Act*, all 16 principles of sustainable development are to be taken into account. This table presents only those principles directly linked to the strategic direction.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
1. Inform, raise awareness, educate, innovate (information/education and training, / research and innovation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and commitment • Access to knowledge 	1. Make people increasingly aware of sustainable development concept and principles. Promote knowledge and experience sharing in this area and assimilate knowledge and know-how facilitating its implementation.	On its Web site, the Office de protection du consommateur presents information concerning responsible consumption. <i>Le Coin de Rafale</i> , the youth section of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, proposes adventures and information capsules for young people.
		2. Create and periodically update Québec's sustainable development profile.	The Institut de la statistique du Québec regularly publishes economic and social indicators for Québec.
		3. Support research and new practices and technologies contributing to sustainable development and maximizing spinoffs in Québec.	<i>Expertise recherche Québec</i> came about under the Québec Science and Innovation Policy to enrich research and innovation monitoring.

Under the Sustainable Development Act, all 16 principles of sustainable development are to be taken into account. This table presents only those principles directly linked to the strategic direction.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
2. Reduce and manage risks to improve health, safety and the environment (preventive approach, concerted risk management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention • Precaution • Environmental protection • Access to knowledge • Health and quality of life 	4. Continue developing and promoting a culture of prevention and define conditions to improve health, safety and the environment.	<p>The Commission de la santé et de la sécurité au travail adopted a three-part action plan on education, training and work integration specifically for young workers.</p> <p>The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux launched the <i>Program for the promotion of healthy lifestyles</i>.</p>
		5. Better prepare communities to face events that could harm their health and safety and mitigate consequences.	The Ministère de la Sécurité publique coordinates the adoption of risk coverage schematics and civil security plans by the communities.
3. Produce and consume responsibly (ecoresponsible production and consumption/ethics, ecoconditionality and social accountability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental protection • Respect for ecosystem support capacity • Responsible production and consumption • Polluter pays 	6. Apply environmental management measures and an ecoresponsible procurement policy to departments and government agencies.	<p>The Centre de services partagés du Québec has adopted an ecoresponsible procurement policy.</p> <p>State enterprises such as Hydro-Québec, Loto-Québec and the Société des alcools du Québec stand out for their socially and environmentally responsible conduct.</p>
		7. Encourage reduction in the quantity of energy, natural resources and materials used to produce and market goods and services.	The Société immobilière du Québec has received environmental certification for several public buildings.
		8. Increase the share of renewable energies having less impact on the environment (biofuels, biogas, biomass, solar energy, wind power, geothermics, hydroelectricity, etc.) in Québec's energy consumption.	<p>The <i>Stratégie énergétique du Québec</i> includes several measures to increase the share of renewable energies.</p> <p>Québec's climate change action plan allows for fighting greenhouse gas emissions while learning to adapt to climate change.</p>
		9. Apply more ecoconditionality and social accountability in public assistance programs and encourage their implementation in financial institutions' programs.	Through its <i>Programme de remboursement des taxes foncières aux exploitations agricoles</i> , the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation has developed an approach to applying ecoconditionality in the farming sector.
		10. Provide the reference points required to make enlightened, responsible consumer choices and promote goods and services certification.	The Ministère du Tourisme, supported by the Bureau de normalisation du Québec, employs the "Quality Approach" to certify tourist products.

Under the *Sustainable Development Act*, all 16 principles of sustainable development are to be taken into account. This table presents only those principles directly linked to the strategic direction.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
4. Increase economic efficiency (externalities/ measures with economic impacts and ecofiscality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic efficiency Internalization of costs Polluter pays 	11. Increasingly reveal the externalities associated with goods and services production and consumption.	Under the <i>Environment Quality Act</i> , enterprises that market or distribute packaging or printed material must compensate the municipalities for recovery and reuse services designated by the government.
		12. Promote recourse to economic fiscal and non-fiscal incentives so that goods and services production and consumption reflect sustainable development imperatives.	Recyc-Québec administers a royalty collected on each new tire sold, to finance the reuse of discarded tires.
5. Address demographic changes (demographic balance/employment and economic development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic efficiency Health and quality of life Social equity and solidarity 	13. Improve Québec's demographic profile and that of its regions.	The <i>Québec Parental Insurance Plan</i> gives better financial support to parents who leave the job market to have or adopt a child.
		14. Promote family life and facilitate the balance between work, school and personal life.	The Youth Policy of the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation proposes an approach that promotes quality of life, training, coaching and access to the profession. The <i>Reduced Contribution Plan</i> increases the ability of families to acquire childcare services for children under age five.
		15. Increase standard of living.	The government's economic development strategy – <i>The Québec Advantage</i> – is specifically aimed at increasing the standard of living of Quebecers.
		16. Increase productivity and the quality of jobs through ecologically and socially responsible measures.	The Government Employment Plan aims to increase manpower qualification in particular.
		17. Transfer public health funds to future generations.	Québec set up the <i>Generations Fund</i> to reduce the debt load.

Under the Sustainable Development Act, all 16 principles of sustainable development are to be taken into account. This table presents only those principles directly linked to the strategic direction.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
6. Sustainable and integrated land use and development (integrated land management/ improvement of human settlements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidiarity • Protection of cultural heritage • Preservation of biodiversity • Health and quality of life • Respect for ecosystem support capacity • Environmental protection 	18. Integrate sustainable development imperatives into land use strategies and plans and regional and local development.	<p>The Commission de protection du territoire agricole promotes land conservation for agricultural purposes.</p> <p>The Québec Water Policy promotes integrated water management.</p> <p>The government assigns land using an approach that integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development in land and natural resources use.</p>
		19. Strengthen the viability and resilience of urban, rural and territorial communities and Native communities.	The government has tasked the Conférences régionales des élus with establishing a development plan within a perspective of sustainable development.
		20. Provide access to basic services according to regional and local realities, with a view to equity and efficiency.	Portail Québec offers citizens and enterprises services that provide access to government services.
7. Preserve and share the collective heritage (management of the collective heritage/ cooperation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-governmental partnership and cooperation • Precaution • Prevention • Respect for ecosystem support capacity • Protection of cultural heritage • Biodiversity preservation 	21. Strengthen the conservation and implementation of the cultural and scientific heritage.	<p>The <i>Estran</i> project in Gaspésie uses an innovative landscape management approach that is based on concertation.</p> <p>The Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine keeps a register of Québec's natural culture.</p>
		22. Protect and promote the natural heritage and resources within the support capacity of ecosystems.	The government adopted Québec Biodiversity Strategy.
		23. Step up cooperation with national and international partners on integrated sustainable development projects.	<p>Québec International Policy identifies the international solidarity effort as one of the government's key international affairs objectives.</p> <p>The Québec government and ten other governments signed an international agreement for the sustainable development of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River waters.</p>

Under the Sustainable Development Act, all 16 principles of sustainable development are to be taken into account. This table presents only those principles directly linked to the strategic direction.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
8. Promote social involvement (community action/ democratic life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and commitment • Inter-governmental partnership and cooperation • Social equity and solidarity 	24. Increase citizens' involvement in their community.	The government adopted a community action plan.
		25. Increase citizens' involvement in decision-making.	Since 1978, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement has acted as a catalyst for the participation of citizens in government decision-making.
9. Prevent and reduce social and economic inequality (equity/ social integration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social equity and solidarity • Inter-governmental partnership and cooperation • Economic efficiency 	26. Prevent poverty and social exclusion.	The Québec government adopted the <i>Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion</i> .
		27. Increase schooling, number of graduates and the population's qualification.	The <i>Government Employment Plan</i> aims among other things to increase the job market qualifications of citizens.
		28. Increase participation in ongoing training activities and manpower qualification.	The government policy on ongoing adult education and training provides basic training, increases the skills level and removes obstacles to accessibility.
		29. Support initiatives of the social economy sector aimed at the sustainable integration of people outside the job market.	The government supports the development of social economy enterprises, particularly in the personal services sector, community housing, social tourism and the environment.



Photos:

Martin Caron
Benoît Lettre
Service des communications, Ville de Laval
Le Québec en images
CCDMO
SOPFEU

Legal deposit
Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec, 2007
ISBN-10 2-550-48357-X (printed version)
ISBN-13 978-2-550-48357-1 (printed version)
ISBN-10 2-550-48358-8 (PDF)
ISBN-13 978-2-550-48358-8 (PDF)
© Gouvernement du Québec, 2007

Québec 

 This paper contains 100% recycled post-consumer fibres.